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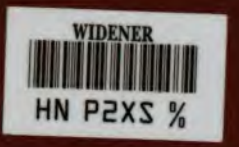

THE TWO POWERS
AND
OTHER ORIGINAL TALES

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THE

TWO POWERS

AND

OTHER ORIGINAL TALES

WITH

MISCELLANEOUS PIECES IN PROSE AND VERSE

BEING THE FIRST OF A SERIES ENTITLED

THE AUSTRALIAN "ONCE-A-YEAR"

BY

E. M. MOONEY.

MELBOURNE:
GEORGE ROBERTSON, 69 ELIZABETH STREET.
MDCCCLXX.

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And for the few that only lend their ear,
That few is all the world ;

* * * *

But what if none ? It cannot yet undo
The love I bear unto this holy skill.

SAMUEL DANIEL, *16th Century.*

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INTRODUCTION.

CHRISTMAS is a time for unbending. Business relaxes its plodding muscles and softens and yields to the spirit of the season. Shops, whether ministering to the comfort of the outer or inner man, put forth their daintiest wares; those that provide our intellectual treats, serve them under the most attractive *covers*, and unknown toys start forth to meet the juvenile gaze, largely exciting the organs of wonder, admiration, and acquisitiveness!

Public amusements invite us, in letters a yard tall, to come and be fascinated. Pantomimes rake up the ashes of Cinderellas, stir up Sleeping Beauties, and rub up old Aladdin's Lamps to enchant, charm, and bewilder us; making children stare, adults grin, and even grey beards wag.

At such a time we put forth our little venture, to sink or swim in the tide of public opinion. We were about to say, in stereotype fashion, the "good-natured public," but on second thoughts the public is

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not good-natured; if pleased it will smile, if displeased will frown, if *ennuyèd* will yawn like any other body.

So we have endeavoured to trim our barque for the season with the lightest sails, paint her with the brightest colours we possess, and furnish her with the happiest imaginary crew at our command.

Some well-meaning friends, with a view to elevate public taste, would have us exclude fiction. In vain. When nature creates a demand, she must have a supply; as well strive to arrest the corolla in the plant or the blossom on the tree.

Our great Teacher himself did not disdain fiction. What are parables but divine fictions? True, they have a moral, and when we can combine instruction with amusement, be it so.

But consider the lilies! If they have a use, the world has been nearly six thousand years old without discovering it. Unlike many plants they will neither fatten or poison us; nor like flax and hemp can they be twisted into either a good or a bad purpose! Their use is to be beautiful; if they innocently please, their leaves (like ours, we hope) shall not have been unfolded in vain.

We planted a lily once in a stagnant pool (we were afraid of the Inspector of Nuisances); it bloomed

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luxuriantly. How many stagnant pools are there in neglected natures, hopeless to the moral agriculturist which yet may yield a soil to a "thing of beauty."

We are aware there is a class of people who, Gradgrind like, will wall you in with facts, and crush the flowers of imagination under a stone, who hold to fact as a lame man to his crutch. Well, these individuals can feed on books of Dates; cannibal-like, devour Biographies, and hold to the Multiplication Table; they may even have a sort of rhyming taste, like the lunatic who repeated five times to an admiring audience, with a musical cadence of voice, and when he came to the climax, "five times twelve are sixty," the applause was as enthusiastic as that bestowed on the wind-up of an American Stump Orator's speech, when (half-seas over) he pathetically appealed to the "Bar tangled spanner"!

Others again with friendly caution insinuate that every topic is exhausted, that "there is nothing new under the sun."

Can the material for thought ever be used up in the endless diversity of nature and art?

We saw a toy the other day, a Charomorphoscope; well, throw in anything, raw or wrought material, at the open end, look in at the tube at the opposite extremity; behold! beautiful transformations, patterns

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exquisitely contrasted, mosaics fit for the halls of fairy queens!

Every mind is something of a Charomorphoscope. No two minds see exactly the same patterns. Nature is for ever turning the instrument, and with the same materials producing an infinite variety of "chaste designs" and "elegant novelties."

All we ask is for the public to look through our toy (it is but a toy), and if pleased with our assortment, it will be an inducement to us to revolve our machine once more, hoping that upon the ensuing anniversary the public will be willing to pay for another peep.

DECEMBER, 1870.

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THE TWO POWERS.

"And wherefore should these good news make me sick?"—
SHAKESPEARE.

CHAPTER I.

THE arrival of the English mail in Melbourne is always looked forward to with a degree of interest, unknown to a "home" metropolitan. The telegraphic summary, from the moment the red flag from our Post-office tower announces the appearance of the mail in Adelaide, is generally anticipated as being rather "sensational." A Fenian outbreak, or a landlord shot in Ireland, a "nice" murder, or a monster embezzlement in England, a canny poisoning case in Scotland, are among the items of intelligence expected as a matter of course. The death of Napoleon, or the Pope, is to be confirmed or contradicted (it does not much matter which), the commercial brain is, of course, principally "wool-gathering." While the disciples of high church, broad church, low church, and no church, stand ready to hold up (or down) their hands, as ritualistic, rationalistic, evangelistic, or spiritistic opinions, are said to prevail at our antipodes.

It was mail day in Melbourne, and seeing all classes of people from the squattocracy to the cottage-ocracy (a

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large class), from a bishop to a beggar, the one nearly as scarce as the other, celestials and terrestrials, earthly and unearthly people hurrying on, and hearing snatches of conversation at intervals, we were led into the above remarks; though from among the crowd that filled the passages where the letters were delivered we are interested only in two individuals, who as soon as they got their packages hurried away to their hotel in Collins-street, whither we shall follow them; though had our stately Post-office existed then as it does now, we should have been glad to have paced in fancy with our friends on its tesselated pavement, and enjoyed in imagination the coolness of its magnificent arched colonnade, while the letters were being perused: but as the growing beauties of the majestic edifice were hidden by wooden abominations at the time, we shall not stop, but follow our heroes to their hotel, where the younger of the two was already engaged in reading his letter aloud to his companion.

To judge by the hearty laughter that accompanied the perusal of this epistle, it must have been an amusing one to the recipient, and as it may throw some light on the history of the two persons already introduced to the reader we shall give it word for word. It ran thus—

"POWERSFORT, *June* 21.

"DEAR TOM,—As you said in your letter you were about to start for Australia, I direct this to Melbourne, hoping it will find you safe and sound. There is an

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old and dear friend of mine whom I wish you to visit while in Victoria, Mr. Ray, of Raymount. I have already written to him, so he will be looking out for your arrival, consequently you and Tom may daily expect an invitation to his place.

"Now, Tom, what I want to impress upon you is this,—Mr. Ray has a daughter, an only one, who I hear is a *perfect paragon* (a wink is as good as a nod to a blind horse), and you might do worse than bring home an Australian bride to the old place. Your mother and I, dear boy, are not getting younger, and we would like to see you happy and comfortable before we go 'to that bourne,' &c., &c.

"Old Ray is rich; and if a bride, as the Germans say (they are a sensible people, Tom), comes to her husband's home *with her bundle under her arm* * she is none the better for it. A bit of money would buy that piece of land, that commands the sea view, you always admired so much, I hear it's for sale, and it joins the estate, you know. However, I would not force your inclinations. I took your mother without a sixpence, and never regretted it, but a Paragon *with money* is not to be had every day.

"All the nice girls here are picked off either by death or matrimony. Miss Blarney (you used to be soft upon, you rogue) has given herself and her five thousand pounds to the Rev. Benjamin Beamish, our new curate. Miss Pynche (that you used to joke and

* *Like a servant.*

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flirt with) has married the son of old Haddock, the rich fishmonger; and poor Lucy Dalton whom you admired so, has gone to her long home. Nothing but changes, Tom. Your mother and I are longing for your return; you have been travelling about now nearly three years. It is time for Tom senior to be at his profession in earnest; he has not an estate at his back like you, you know; but he has one in his *head* I know, clever fellow. All here send a thousand kind wishes to you both, and hoping to see you *soon*, double or single, is the wish of your

"Affectionate father,

"THOMAS POWER.

"P.S.—I forgot to say that there has been an outbreak of the Fenians not a hundred miles from us, but don't be alarmed, Tom, they would not hurt a hair of our heads. Wasn't there a fourth cousin of your mother's half brother's sister's son hanged in '98?—and this sets us at our ease. I keep no arms except the old rusty sword that hangs where you left it over the mantel-piece in your room, that you used to flourish with at theatricals when you were a boy—*this is known*.—Yours, T. P.

"THOMAS POWER, ESQ.,
"Post-office, Melbourne, &c."

The two young men alluded to in the above letter were cousins bearing the same names.

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The younger we shall call "Tom" to distinguish him from his cousin, who was usually called "Power,"—the lads at school and college ringing changes on his name, such as *the* Power, Powerful Power, the Great Power, probably owing to the superiority of his attainments over those of his relative, whose unambitious disposition was contented with plain Tom.

This latter, then, was the heir to considerable estates in the south of Ireland, and an only son: while his cousin had not much to depend on save his brains, of which it was generally acknowledged he had a fair share.

Tom's father warmly encouraged the friendship that grew up between the lads from an early age; a friendship that was still more closely cemented by his son's having accidentally saved his friend's life while bathing, a circumstance that might have happened with an utter stranger, but the event stood out like an act of heroism in the eyes of his cousin, who mentally resolved no sacrifice should be too great on his part, if it could only promote the happiness of his friend.

The two "Powers" had not long to wait for the invitation, which Tom's letter led them to expect, so they resolved that when they had seen all the "lions" and "native bears" of Melbourne, they would proceed to Raymount, to taste some of the enjoyments of bush life, having secret misgivings that, on the whole, it would be rather dull.

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Accordingly, seated in an easy after-dinner sort of mood one evening discussing their plans for the future, and the more immediate topic of interest, their coming visit to the bush, Tom suddenly asked his friend (as he was learned), the meaning of the word "paragon." "Is it fish, flesh, or fowl?" said he. "I suspect my father has been studying the dictionary to find a word sufficiently attractive to lure me to the den of this bush wonder; to what order in the animal kingdom does a paragon belong, Tom?"

"In this case, at all events, it is a *ray*," said his friend, smiling.

"An odd fish," replied the other, "how would it suit my *coat* of *arms?*"

"Take the word in a brighter sense," said his cousin, "and it will gild them."

"I don't want gold."

"Still, matter of fact," said Power, "we all want *sunshine*."

"It may prove 'moonshine' after all; but seriously speaking I never *did* like paragons; they put you too much on your good behaviour."

"Every one has an ideal paragon," replied Power; "your father, most likely, simply means that the young lady is rich and beautiful—two things not to be despised (the former especially) by parents; in fact we already know that much by hearsay, and as you are—well, not exactly beautiful, yet we may safely say *rich*, I suppose with you it will be, to 'come, see, and conquer.'"

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"*As* I am rich," returned Tom, while a shade passed over his face, "I shall have but to 'come, see, and conquer.' 'Young Tom,' attached to three or four thousand a year, is smiled upon, flattered, and would not be refused, perhaps even by a paragon. Bah! you remember Emily, who threw me over for the young baronet? What eyes she had! He was richer than I. She certainly had the most splendid eyes I ever saw."

"Eye, you mean," replied his friend. "I could never catch *both* at the same time; *one* fascinated you, without doubt, but the other was always looking out for a better chance; however, you were saved in time."

"Thanks to you," answered Tom. "I wonder," continued he musing, "do paragons like you for yourself alone. My wealth sometimes makes me miserable. There are you now, far beyond me in intellect, attainments, and—well, we'll not dispute about appearance; yet you can't deny, as far as our experience has gone hitherto, that I am *the Power* in society."

"You rate yourself too low," said his friend; "your character is more *attractive* than mine (I speak magnetically), especially towards women; besides I am more stoical, perhaps indifferent to the opinion of the many, the cause, or it may be the result, of my inability to please mankind or womankind. That which does not ignite does not communicate a flame —the Italians have a proverb to that effect, so I have kept possession of my heart; while yours, like a

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folded rocket, needs but the spark of a fine eye to cause it to shoot out its hidden brilliancy."

"I suppose you are a male paragon," said Tom; "if so, when paragon meets paragon, then comes the tug of—'*Love.*' I tell you beware, you know you have an ideal one."

"The most convenient one I could have under present circumstances, as she would require neither food nor clothing."

"There is something in that," said Tom musing; "but do you never mean to marry?"

"I shall not put my wife's nose into a briefless barrister's bag," said Power, laughing. "To drag along the cart of matrimony requires more substantial fare. I shall make my fortune first, and then if I meet my paragon——"

"You'll put your gilt oats to her nose," replied Tom, "to make her follow you. Now, if I were you, I should win her first, and then reward her."

"For what?"

"For loving you for yourself alone."

"I am not vain enough for that, and as I should want to love *her* for herself alone, I should think it indispensable simply to put bread in her mouth, and a roof over her head."

"A man like you would always be able to do that much; but now-a-days girls will not be satisfied with necessaries, they must have grandeur and dress, furniture, equipages, &c., &c., &c., and *therefore* they will not marry you for *yourself alone.*"

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"Unless they are paragons," interrupted his friend, laughing.

"But how test one?" said Tom. "There's the rub."

"By the rules of common sense," replied Power.

"I could never apply rules to any woman, they are unmeasurable; *that* science is quite beyond my skill. Suppose *you* test this Paragon for me, and report progress. You have judgment, discrimination, and above all an iron nature; you will not ignite, and be dazzled by a shower of sparks from your own imagination; you will gauge her beauty, her goodness, her accomplishments by the plomb-line of common sense."

"And if I find her peerless?" answered his friend, with an amused smile.

"*Then*, to please my father, I should condescend to take her, always provided she would take me—on one condition."

"And that is?" inquired his companion.

"That she believed me to be a poor man."

"That would be impossible," answered Power.

"Not if you would help me."

"*I* help you! you talk riddles," said Power.

"The idea has been running in my head during the course of this conversation, that the 'case' could be managed if we only *changed characters;* we should not have to alter *names*, you know."

Power started; anything like deceit was so repugnant to his nature that he at once sbook his head in a decidedly negative manner.

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"After all, where's the risk?" continued Tom. "If I succeed the plot will only appear, as it is, an innocent stratagem to win a fair lady's heart. If I fail, we both leave Australia in a month, and the eternity of the ocean will be for ever between the two Powers and the Paragon.

Still Power shook his head.

"You saved me from an unhappy marriage," said Tom persuasively, "and now, continue your good work and help me to a happy one. Where's the harm? Old Ray is half blind, his wife dead, his sister a fat and sleepy character. Such is the description of the family: of course, the Paragon stands out in beautiful relief, and our plot is only to *prove* her a Paragon."

"I said by the rules of common sense," said Power.

"But if I have failed by *the Rule of Three?*" replied Tom, laughing. "We'll state it thus," argued he: "as four thousand a year is to *Tom*, so is a Paragon to the answer; divide, multiply, subtract as you will, the answer is sure to be YES!"

"And if it should be *No*, in your altered circumstances, you may still regret your loss."

"I shall have gained a loss, then, as we say in Ireland. Come now, say yes," pleaded Tom earnestly, "it will be capital fun to say the least of it."

The boyish face, for it still looked boyish in spite of its four and twenty summers, looked so like the handsome, eager face that years ago struggled with the rushing waters, that Power yielded, against his convictions.

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This sacrifice of principle to one of Power's temperament was a greater trial than any personal risk or pecuniary loss could be. He rarely allowed himself to swerve from principle, but if the sacrifice ensured a happy future to his friend, whose ardent impetuous nature he often feared might be wrecked on the shores of matrimony, he would not consider the sacrifice too great, and his worldly sense could not but allow he was in less danger of running against that fatal rock, while carrying the easy sails of a briefless barrister, than while floating along freighted with the valuable cargo of a heavy rent-roll.

Thus they planned their stratagem, *if* so and so succeeded, well; if it failed, not so bad either. And thus we all weave our plots, while Fate stands by, with scissors in hand, ready to snip them when it suits her purpose. While at the same time she spins her invisible threads, and draws us into her mysterious meshes blindfold, leaving us to get out the best way we can.

CHAPTER II.

"FRANCES! do come here, and see the late G. P. R. James' equestrian picture realised; here are 'two horsemen' actually 'riding up a hill;' the one yet in the dawn of manhood, and his companion, ah! here the description fails,—he is *not* past the prime of existence."

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The voice was that of a young lady, who had been reading in the recess of a window, belonging to a pretty room, which was so situated as to give an extensive view of the surrounding country.

"Well," said a young girl entering from an adjoining apartment, "is there anything extraordinary in seeing two or even three horsemen in the bush riding up or down a hill?"

"You know it is *not* an ordinary thing to behold two *new chums* plucked fresh from the 'Emerald Isle,' and preserved, I hope not green, for us to feast our eyes upon in this wilderness."

"A wilderness!"

"Oh, you need not arch your back and make ready to spring at me, when I speak metaphorically of your beloved birth-place; you must grant it is a wilderness in some things."

"In picturesque horsemen for instance; but you must allow the surrounding 'accessories' are equal to the noble equestrians; what would they be without that gently rising hill, that undulating valley, that leafy-veiled river, and the glorious sun that gives a poetical lustre to the entire prospect?"

"Ah," replied the first speaker, "if there were only a ruined abbey peeping out amid the foliage, and if the horsemen had only plumed helmets on their heads, and were cased in armour, and that they were riding to a baronial castle, and if we could only hear the 'Warder's sounding horn,' see the drawbridge lowered, and the men-at-arms——"

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"I think the dinner-bell will satisfy the guests' ears quite as well as the warder's horn," returned the other interrupting her friend's romantic picture; "and here comes old Darby to supplant the men-at-arms; and I think the neat gravel-sweep as pretty and more convenient than moats and drawbridges; and as to a baronial castle, our dear home is quite as romantic in its way, and I am sure papa is as venerable and hospitable as any Baron of old; there he is, with his white hair waving in the breeze, and a benevolent smile welcoming his guests to his castle."

"I suppose you think the 'bell-toppers' are as graceful as plumed helmets?" replied her friend.

"Well! you must admit they take them off gracefully."

"Pretty well for moderns," returned the other. "I see they are gentlemen at all events; one is darkish, and the other fairish. I wonder which is *the* Mr. Power."

"I suppose the elder," continued she, "as he introduces his friend."

"You'll know soon enough, come away from the window!"

"Oh! they can't see me, Darby has taken round the horses, and they have vanished. Well I declare, the sight is as good as a chapter of romance in its way, only for the bell-toppers,"—here the young lady laughed merrily; "but we must dress for dinner. What shall I wear? they are connoisseurs, as they have 'been to Paris.' I shall wear my violet silk, and

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you your mossy green, which makes your cheeks glow like a blush rose. We shall contrast well."

"How your tongue runs on, Mabel; Don't imagine that gentlemen who have mixed in the best society at 'home,' will be interested in bush rustics. If they should criticise your dress, most likely they will think silks and satins out of place in the country."

"Doubtless they'll think we wear nothing but wool here, as they must have met so many sheep on their way. Suppose we array ourselves in serge, and get a crook?"

"There 's the first bell," said her cousin, for the young ladies stood in that degree of relationship toward each other, "we had better get ready at all events."

Accordingly the young girls set to work to prepare their dinner toilette, which was soon completed. Frances adopting her friend's suggestion, however, about the mossy green, and the latter taking her own counsel with regard to the violet.

We shall say nothing about Parisian ladies, as comparisons are odious, and these we shall not stop to describe, but let the results speak for themselves.

Frances, or Miss Ray as she should be called, descended to the drawing-room to receive her father's guests, being the lady of the house, as her aunt's infirmities prevented her taking an active part in doing the honours of the establishment. Mabel lingered behind, as she often did, till the last moment, to sit at the open window, and enjoy the lingering beams of the setting sun, which produced an ever-

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varying picture on earth and sky at this hour. She was preparing to descend when the sound of voices arrested her. So she waited till all was still again. The bustle was occasioned by Mr. Ray conversing as he ascended the stairs with the gentlemen, whose apartments joined his own; and Mabel waited for the doors to shut before she ventured to descend.

Now it so happened that Mr. Ray and Power being engaged on some interesting topic of conversation, did not perceive Tom lingering behind. He had stopped upon a landing place to admire a beautiful specimen of stained glass workmanship—a window in imitation of mediæval art. The western sun was sending its rich light through its magnificent colouring, and investing the atmosphere with the spell which the artist intended doubtless to create. Tom becoming suddenly aware that it was time to break this spell, turned somewhat abruptly to ascend the next flight, when he received almost in his arms some one as abruptly descending!

It was Mabel, who, thinking the coast clear had somewhat swiftly descended the flight of stairs leading from her apartment, to join her cousin in the drawing-room.

Of course there was an instant recoil, a confused apology from Tom, and a blush and scarcely repressed smile from the young girl, who, however, was the first to recover her self-possession.

"Mr. Power, I presume?" said Mabel.

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Tom bowed, "Have I the pleasure of seeing Miss Ray?"

"Miss Mabel Ray."

"I was so spell-bound with the effect of that beautiful window that I never looked before me; you must excuse my abruptness."

"Oh! I think the abruptness was mutual," replied Mabel, "I thought your doors were shut." She then turned to descend, and Tom wheeled round to let her pass, and continued to gaze down the flight she descended till her form vanished from his sight.

Had one of the angels in the window stepped out and slid on a violet sunbeam into the outer regions, he could not have been more astounded at the vision than he was under the present circumstances. In that mediæval sunshine, with her soft hair waving on her shoulders, her long eye-lashes like subdued rays from her star-like eyes, and her hazy violet dress with golden stripes—the vision that met Tom's eyes was not a common one.

"Where did she come from?" said he to himself, "*I* heard no door open and perceived no foot-fall." He looked at the window again, to see if there was not an angel missing, and then at his arms, doubtless expecting to behold a stray feather from a celestial pinion, and finally at the ground which really glistened with something like star-dust shed from some heavenly Cinderella's slipper, no doubt. There is no knowing how long this rainbow-coloured study might have continued,

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had not the dinner-bell with its brazen tongue, summoned his spirit back to earth; and the voice of Power asking him, "What he meant?" forced him to realize there were other matters to claim his attention besides bush beauties seen through the happy medium of mediæval art!

When Tom reached the drawing-room whither some ten minutes before his friend had preceded him, he found him engaged in conversation with a young lady who, had his brain not been flooded with the brilliant vision of the landing-place, might have floated into its empty caverns, and reigned supreme goddess of his soul. And when Mr. Ray introduced his daughter and niece, he was so perplexed at the sight of two Paragons, (having already decided on the merits of the first), that no one could tell from his confused bow that he was a young gentleman, as Mabel said, who had "been to Paris."

Dinner being announced, Mr. Ray led in his sister, Power offered his arm to the young lady with whom he had been conversing, and Tom was left to bring up the rear with his "vision;" he felt a secret satisfaction at playing second fiddle, for the first time in his life, in society; the heir of Powersfort, of course, taking precedence of his numerous cousins, though he was their junior in years.

As Mr. Ray fastened like a leech upon Power, drawing from him all the information he possessed of old times, people, and places, Tom found his position easier to sustain than he at first imagined. There

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was no awkward questioning. The host mostly speaking of Tom's father as "the Squire," left Power at liberty to answer in a straightforward, unreserved manner. And when Mr. Ray led the conversation towards the political aspect of Ireland, Power, plunging into a subject he was familiar with, grew earnest, and even eloquent, and quite absorbed the attention at his side of the table.

Tom was not slow in taking advantage of his situation. As he did not think it necessary that his lovely companion should be interested in Power's eloquence, or initiated into Ireland's grievances, he tried her on a variety of topics, principally Australian, but the ground seemed to crumble under his feet; he made no way. He found, however, that he was insensibly led to speak of his own country, his adventures, and his travels; so, kindling with her appreciation, he eloquently described the hoary peaks of Switzerland, the blue ever-young Mediterranean, the temples, the towers, the castles, the shrines of Europe, as it is; and as it *was*, judging from its stupendous relics of Mediæval grandeur.

Was it fancy? but at the sound of the last words his fair listener's soul seemed to glow in her eyes, and upon her brow and cheeks, as though her spirit had followed his description, and, as it were, left its casket, when some magical words, like a wizard's wand, dispersed the illusion, and the timid spirit flashed back to its home, leaving its portals a-glow!

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This was Tom's idea, at all events, for when the ladies rose to depart he did not seem to think it necessary to open the door for them (though he was placed nearest to it), doubtless thinking that the opening of such a material thing as a common door, was not requisite for the floating away of the ethereal vision that kindled and was illumined by his eloquence.

When the young ladies reached the drawing-room, as their aunt was enjoying her after-dinner nap, they had the conversation to themselves. The discourse, as was natural, turning upon their visitors, Mabel asked her cousin how she liked her entertainer.

Francis unhesitatingly expressed her approbation, and demanded *her* opinion in like manner.

"Oh! there can be but one opinion at present," replied Mabel. "My 'entertainer' has travelled over the glorious old West, and has carried some of its romance in his head in spite of the bell-topper; but," she added with a sigh, "it will soon grow *woolly*; and the 'scab,' no doubt, will shortly appear, if he prolongs his stay in this country. Not that I think him *sheepish* in the least, but my uncle will infect him. The *spot* has shown itself in the elder already, and you know how it spreads."

"Well, it is our *staple* stock of conversation," said her cousin laughing; "it does instead of the weather in other countries."

"'The spot' seems hallowed ground here, at all events," replied Mabel, "but we must dismiss the

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topic. I want to know which of your visitors you like the best."

"Really, that is rather premature," said Frances, "seeing I know so little of either; you deserve to be answered in the American fashion, one man is as good as the other and a great deal better. And as I have replied to you, you must allow me the 'retort courteous,' and ask you the same question. Pray which do *you* prefer?"

"Oh! Dives, of course," said Mabel with a little toss of her head.

"For shame. We must alter your initials to M. M. instead of M. R.," said her cousin, "*Mercenary Mabel!*"

"M. M.," said her friend thoughtfully, "it would do in any case; I should be miserable if I were poor!"

The young ladies here were interrupted by a bustle outside the door; it was caused by Matty the parlour-maid coming in with the tea-things.

This stopped the conversation. The gentlemen soon after joined the ladies. After tea there was music, the fair hostess selecting Irish music in compliment to her father's guests; this brought on a discussion about Irish scenery, legends, and traditions, in all of which the two Powers proved themselves to be well skilled, and so an agreeable evening drew to a close.

The two young men when they retired to their apartments expressed their mutual satisfaction at what promised to be so agreeable a visit, and the last words

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Tom asked his friend before he closed his eyes in slumber were,

"By the way, Tom, which *is* the Paragon?"

To which Power replied sententiously, "*Miss* Ray of course."

"Oh! *of course,*" said Tom, and the lovers of romance must excuse him that on this first night, "it was *sleep* and not dreams that came into his head."

CHAPTER III.

WHILE sailing over the ocean, how often do we hear the truism, "There is but a plank between us and eternity!" But in the voyage of life especially when journeying with the "upper ten," how rarely do we remember, there is but a plank just as literally between us and another world who have the same passions and prejudices, virtues and vices as ourselves.

Curiosity more particularly, the indulgence of which led to the first "lapse" on record, seems the propensity most eagerly indulged in by the fairer portion of that under world separated from us by the "plank." It may be, perhaps, that that noble faculty, lacking its legitimate food, seeks its gratification, not in the "flora and fauna" of Nature; nor in the not less attractive bookshelf, but in the leaves of the "forbidden tree," perhaps of a garden or shrubbery, a stray letter, behind doors or haystacks, or even through common keyholes.

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The reader must pardon this digression, for except for this assumption, no natural coincidence can account for the fact of Matty the next morning following the arrival of Mr. Ray's visitors, asking at the servants' breakfast table—

"Who was Mr. Dives?"

None of the servants could tell. At length the cook said—"When Mr. Mumby comes in, he will most likely know."

Mr. Mumby was a sort of right-hand man of Mr. Ray's, acting occasionally in the capacity of valet and butler; he had also in his youth been in the service of a dissenting minister, from whom he imbibed his religious opinions, besides various scraps of history, religious and profane, which he made use of as occasion required.

When Mumby entered, the cook put the question to him.

"Dives, ladies (we don't say *Mister* to scriptural characters), was the rich man who fared some-chewously every day, and *grudged* the beggar at his gate" (Mumby was one of those who would not give even *Dives* his due) "the crumbs that fell from his table; but his *tables* was turned in t'other world, for the beggar wasn't allowed to give *him* a drop of water to cool his burning tongue!"

"I've heard the *pariable,*" said Matty, who was brought up by a strict old grandmother, "but I can't tell why Miss Mabel should prefer such a 'orrid old character."

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"How do you know Miss Mabel prefers him?" said Mumby, eyeing her keenly.

"Oh!" said Matty, "when I was just opening the door to lay the tea-things, I heard her say something about *preferring* Dives, so as I did not know any one of that name, I thought I would ask."

"I hear one of the young gentlemen that came yesterday is very rich," said another of the servants.

"Ha!" said Matty, with an upward jerk of her head, "I see why Miss Mabel prefers Dives *now!*"

"Kinsidering the morsel of information your curiosity had to feed on," said Mumby, "I think you're hardly warranted in spekle-lating on Miss Mabel's preference."

"Whether I speckle late or early, I suppose it 's nothing to you, Mr. Mumby."

"The honour of the house *is* something to me, Miss Matilda," said Mumby, who, to do him justice, respected his young mistresses, and generally resented any slight cast upon them, "and I hope, Miss Quick, you'll learn something from the parable."

"Seeing that I am not egzackly weighing down under a load of riches, Mr. Mumby, perhaps you'll be good enough to tell me what *I* can learn from it?"

"To be good to the poor," said Susan, the scullery-maid," cramming her mouth, and speaking at the same time.

"That's one thing," of course, said Mumby. "Well, Miss Quick, do you give it up?"

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"Well," said Matty, "I suppose we'll all be punished for our sins, and Dives was punished for his."

"*Punished in kind*, Miss Matilda; the rich man's tongue fared *some-chewously* every day, and he was punished in his *tongue*."

"What a awful thing it would be to be *deaf*, eh! Miss Matty? If *some* of our Mother Eve's daughters," continued he, "was punished with deafness, it would be a punishment *in kind*."

"Well, if we was all deaf, Mr. Mumby, it would be a kind of *punshment* to you" (Matty's manner of speaking was so rapid, she often slipped over a syllable, while at the same time she frequently admitted a stray surplus vowel for the sake of euphony), "for you'd have to keep company with yourself, and you mighn't find your sussiety more agreeable than other sinnerses."

Mr. Mumby had not been exactly taking this view of the matter; he meant the application to be more personal, as regarded Matty.

"I mean individual punishment for individual sins, Miss Quick; for example, suppose curiosity led an ear to get information in a draughty place; it caught cold, as ears will; suppose deafness follows, as nat'ral as thunder follows lightning. Well, is not that a punishment *in kind*—the ear offended, the ear brought its punishment on itself."

"Well," said Matty, while a streak shot across her cheek, the lightning that generally preceded *her* thunder, "suppose noses that poked theirselves into

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other people's affairs, that didn't mind their own business; suppose they was poked in turn would that be a *punch meant in kind*, eh! Mr. Mumby?"

As Mumby was not so ready as Matty he gave no reply to this, but his little round eyes darted fire at her; and any one that looked at him just then, would understand that he *kept it in his nose for her*.

"Well," said the cook, "*I* see no harm in ladies preferring rich men to poor men. *I* should, I know, if there wasn't much difference in the men."

"There's harm, ma'am, when people gets at the wrong side of doors, and gets the wrong end of conversations; doors was made to open and shut for *in*-gress and *e*-gress," continued Mumby with importance, "and people shouldn't use them to *trans*-gress."

"Well, I never!" said Matty, "it's a pity it's not Sunday, there'd be no need to go to church after that sermon."

"I hope you'll take it to heart, miss."

"'Hope deferred makes the heart sick,'" Mr. Mumby, "so hope nothink for me if you mean to keep your heart healthy."

"I wonder you're not ashamed to speak that way to Mr. Mumby," said the cook, who generally took his part.

"Wonders, then, will never cease," said Matty, who had a store of proverbs at command, her grandmother generally clinching her advice to her grandchild by an apt one.

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"Let her alone," said Mumby; "she likes to hear herself talk."

"Yes; let well enough alone," said the girl, rising to go away. "I think I'm good enough for the like of you."

Mumby held up his hand, the cook put her fingers into her ears, till Matty was out of sight.

"That girl will breed mischief," said Mumby, "if she is not kept under."

"She's a pert minx," said the cook, and so this amicable party separated to perform their several avocations.

CHAPTER IV.

Our friend Tom had left Mr. Ray and Power deep in politics, so considering himself a connoisseur in horse-flesh, he had sauntered out to the stables to examine some new additions to their inmates lately purchased by his host. He was in the act of crossing over to a shed near which was a large haystack, from which a horny hand was drawing some hay, when a voice as if it issued from the stack cried out—

"Oh! but yere honor is welcome to Austhralia, and how did you lave the squire yer honor's father, and is ould Ireland in the same place at all, at all?"

A flush overspread Tom's face at this extraordinary greeting, and turning to see whence the voice proceeded, he encountered a rather favourable specimen

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of an Irish peasant in the person of a man apparently about sixty-five years of age, but in reality upwards of seventy.

"I do not know you," said Tom, "and I think you must mistake me for the other gentleman."

"Is it to mistake the son of the squire, and you the very *parable* of him! Oh bedad me eyesight is not that far gone yit."

"You have not seen the other gentleman," said Tom; "there is a family resemblance, though he takes more after his mother, besides you know we are all *Powers*."

"Oh sure I know, aren't they as plinty as blackberries in them parts of Ireland, the rale ould blood too, more power to them," said Darby unconscious of a pun; "but," he continued winking at Tom, doubtless under the impression that the latter was about to take a "rise" out of him, "I *have* seen the other gentleman and a proper young man he is, but faix! he hasn't *that* in his eye the squire had, and his father before him, and 'pon me conscience his son afther him."

Tom glanced round him anxiously, then beckoning to Darby drew him aside, and presently they left the yard, and crossed into an unfrequented paddock, through which they walked apparently in close confabulation for some time.

When they reached the fence adjoining the road, Tom got over, leaving Darby to return; the latter watched Tom till he was nearly out of sight, then cut a caper in the air, marvellous for one of his years,

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winked one eye, put his finger flat against the side of his nose, and finally scratched his head, a sure sign of a puzzle in the brain of a son of Erin; he then walked slowly back, threw a bright coin in the air, caught it again, and pocketed it. When he approached the stack, and again put in his horny hand, he muttered to himself, "No, he's not himself, he's his sh——; what's that—never mind—Ould Darby 'ill be as tight as a trivet."

Now it happened that Matty had been out on an egg-hunting expedition, and had been searching for her treasures under the side of the stack opposite to which Tom and Darby were standing, at the moment of the latter's original welcome. She had heard enough to whet her curiosity, but owing to the thickness of the stack and Tom's purposely suppressed voice, she did not hear all. We are sorry to say, Mr. Mumby's sermon was quite thrown away upon her. She heard enough, however, to know that Tom was not what he represented himself to be, and she saw them walk away in deep consultation, on some apparently mysterious project, observed Darby's pantomimic gestures, and finally heard his closing soliloquy.

"There's something wrong there," said she to herself, "there's some plot I must get at the bottom of. Who knows but they're bushrangers in disguise, and may be bribing Darby to hold his tongue. Perhaps the pelice is after them. Good gracious," said she, as if a sudden thought struck her, "they're Irishers, and, as sure as my name is Matilda Quick, they're

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Fenians in disguise. I must watch them for the dear young ladies' sakes. I saw him they call young Mr. Tom walking with Miss Mabel in the garden, and didn't he look as if—but mum's the word. That reminds me of that odious Mumby, one can't tell a secret to one's self when that old cockatoo's about. He ought to have been a missionary to the blackfellows, no doubt they'd admire him and not understand him, like the cook! Well, well, people's not always in their proper places in this world. I wish only *I* was born with a silver spoon in my mouth!"

"I think a gag would suit you better," said Mumby, suddenly coming round from the other side; "there's the cook waiting for the eggs, and here you are wishing for silver spoons!"

"People in glass houses shouldn't throw stones. Pray how much did you hear, Mr. Mumby?" said Matty, with an air of indifference, but with secret uneasiness.

"Enough to know you are a *goose*," replied he.

"He heard me call him a cockatoo," thought she, "I wonder did he hear more. Well," answered Matty, "you need not have come so far to learn so little. So I am a goose, am I? we have strange birds in our poultry yard."

Mumby's eyelids quivered, a sure sign of repressed anger in him.

"But," added Matty, "I shan't call names, Mr. Mumby. "I wonder now," continued she, feeling her way, "are we to have any foreign himportations.

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I've heard Darby talk of *Feenixes* in the parks in Ireland; I wonder now, would the strange gentlemen bring over any of them birds?"

"I've heard my old master, the Reverend Jeremiah Skavinjer, say that a Phœnix rises from its own ashes. I believe your tongue, Miss Matty, was a born Phœnix, for if it was burnt, there 's life enough in it to wag again and set a house on fire. I'd advise you to keep your tongue off the strange gentlemen."

"Ah! my tongue knows its own place, Mr. Mumby," said Matty gathering up her eggs, "so the pot needn't call the kettle black face. I wish you a good morning." Saying this the girl drew herself up, and sailed towards the house like a trim vessel that had taken the colours from the enemy.

"Cockatoo! indeed," said Mumby, looking after her as though he would like to have a piece of her between his teeth, which were hidden by his nose and chin, which nearly met. "What put the *Phœnixes* in her head I wonder? She 's on the track of these Irish gentlemen already. I'll Phœnix her, the jade!"

The discomfited Mumby sneaked into the house, his eyelids quivering about his little round eyes, and his arms hanging by his side like battered wings.

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CHAPTER V.

Nearly a fortnight had elapsed since the Powers had visited Raymount; the month was September, consequently, Spring was treading on the heels of Winter —not that these seasons have much difference here, so insensibly do the new leaves take the place of the old. The country here, like a young lady, always nice, looking still nicer in a newer dress and a few ornaments.

Our friends enjoyed themselves thoroughly; they had a kangaroo hunt, some opossum shooting, and, with the assistance of the blacks in an excursion to the neighbouring ranges, had secured one or two specimens of the beautiful lyre bird. In fact, Mr. Ray had put the 'elements' at their service; even got up a bush-fire for them on a small scale, when the wind was in a favourable direction for the experiment.

Water seemed the sole niggard of its bounties —the water-fall was a failure; the river, though pretty, did not suit the eyes of skilful anglers; but the creeks yielded better sport, and taking out their tackle one favourable day, they resolved to try their luck in the neighbouring waters of the surrounding district, and bring home something to add to the delicacies of their host's table.

The young ladies had gone to a neighbouring family, the Browns, to invite them to a pic-nic on the following day; and as many of the family who chose

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to return with them, were to be offered accommodation at Raymount, in order to start early on the ensuing morning.

The two friends sat on the bank of the creek with their rods in their hands; their patience sorely tried. They were pretty much in the same predicament as the zealous country rector, in a parish of worldlings. Do what he would the worthy pastor could not get the people to repent; and our anglers *could not* get the fish to rise to the hook. Both seemed in a reverie. Power was the first to speak.

"Well, Tom, when do you mean to commence your *role* with your father's paragon?"

"Have you sounded her?" said Tom, turning the "tail of his eye" towards his companion.

"She's all we decided a paragon ought to be," replied Power, always pronouncing the *nondescript* with a certain hesitation of manner.

"Then she's not mercenary?" said Tom.

His friend repeated, "Not mercenary."

Tom continued, "Amiable, accomplished, intellectual?"

"Amiable, accomplished, intellectual," repeated Power, parrot-like.

"Then 'she's all our fancy painted her'?" said Tom.

"*My fancy* did not paint her," replied Power.

"No," returned Tom, "you gauged her by the rule of common sense, and now that she's measured *to order* I must see how she'll suit me."

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Tom again looked furtively at his companion, who remained as motionless as his rod, and apparently as intent on the water.

Suddenly there was a jerk. Power raised his rod, and captured a mullet.

"Bravo!" said Tom, "you fish in deeper waters than I; we must change places."

"Well then," said Power, "the programme is ready, and you'll begin to play your part this evening."

"I'll begin whenever you like," replied Tom; "as second fiddle?" continued he with an arch look.

Power was as grave as a judge passing sentence on *somebody*.

"I hope you are not playing the fool with Miss Mabel Ray," said his friend; "the young lady is not an 'Emily,' or 'Miss Blarney.'"

"One must have some amusement in the bush," Tom said, looking down.

"The Browns are to be at Raymount this evening," Power said; "did you notice last Sunday, on coming from church how attentive Mr. Phil was to Miss Mabel Ray?"

"He's not fit to tread in her shadow," said Tom, all alive now.

"That does not prevent him trying to get at the substance for all that; besides," said Power, glancing keenly at Tom, "the young lady is a dependent. Mr. Brown is well off, the eldest son of a rich squatter, he would be a good match for her, and he is not a bad fellow."

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Tom was thoughtful for awhile, he then said abruptly,

"I'll try my chance with the Paragon; she's not very come-at-able, but you must help me."

"I'll help you," said Power.

"And you'll amuse Mabel. No, on second thoughts, let her have her fling with Brown," said Tom, jerking up his rod, and having the satisfaction of seeing a fish slip into the water. "We've had enough of this," continued he, rather testily. "Shall we return?"

"As you please," said his friend. So putting up their tackle, and their "little game" into their basket, they turned their faces homewards. As our anglers had a walk of some miles before them it was nearly dinner hour when they reached their destination. The fish, however, were duly cooked, praised, and eaten.

Phil Brown and his sister were present. The rest of the Brown party and a few more friends were to come the next morning and join the excursion to the Quarries, a favourite resort of pleasure-seekers.

The summit of this rocky eminence was a kind of natural "grand stand" for viewing the varied beauties of a wide and picturesque valley.

A valley that seemed hollowed out by the mighty sweep of some gigantic wave that carried the debris of earth and ocean to form the wavy summit of the mountains that bounded its extremity, and to give root to the trees which carried their rich fringed outline round their undulating crests. Here also might be

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seen glimpses of lagoons glancing through the dense foliage, over which at times the black swan sails gracefully, and marshy swamps on whose reedy edges the native-companion, that "wide-awake" bird, stalks, uttering, when fearful of danger, its "trumpet-note of alarm," and lastly revealing patches of peaceful sheep, which gave a domestic charm to the otherwise wild beauty of this primeval picture.

Some of the excavations belonging to this stony elevation, served as temporary "marble halls," where the realities of a rare banquet were often spread, and where young people doubtless often "dreamt" as delightfully as the heroine of the Opera.

The tea-table at Raymount was the centre of attraction for most young persons belonging to the families of the gentry for miles round.

Distance is thought little of in the bush, ladies and gentlemen generally being good riders, and when youth and beauty, grace and accomplishments, were concentrated under one roof, its inmates were seldom in want of agreeable society.

Miss Ray was as usual seated at the head of the table this evening, the paraphernalia of the Celestials before her, and an antique silver urn, an heir-loom of the family, rising in the midst like a temple or joss-house, for the moon-faced creatures depicted on the old china to worship at and mirror their serene orb-like faces in its lunar glow.

Mr. Ray and his sister occupied as usual the seats on Miss Ray's right, and somehow Power being con-

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sidered the principal guest generally sat on her left. A tea-table is rarely formal, and happily dispenses with etiquette, so there was no reason why the "places" should be different on this evening, but they *were* nevertheless. Tom had slid, he scarcely knew how, into Power's seat, Miss Brown on his left; while Mabel with Power and Phil Brown were placed nearly opposite Miss Ray.

Tom was very assiduous in his attentions to his fair hostess, took the cups and saucers diligently from her hand, offered her the delicacies within and beyond his reach, and, when he had an opportunity, scrutinized her face with more critical acumen than he had yet done. He was not a bad judge either, having studied heads at school, and taken lessons at Rome from some of her best living artists, and not less important ones from the relics of the "mighty dead."

Applying his "art" rules to her beauty, as Power had his "common sense" ones to her mind and heart, Tom found Miss Ray perfect. She was rather paler than usual this evening, a circumstance which gave a statuesque grace to her loveliness, and yet yielded it a charm the marble can never possess.

Chignons were in their infancy then, or rather had not yet taken *root*—not having assumed the forms (as the "Girl of the Period" tells us) of melons, pumpkins, vegetable marrows, clusters of tomatoes, bird's nests, &c., &c.

A simple scroll-like arrangement, surmounted by a sort of coronet-comb, was the sole ornament of Miss

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Ray's head, it also suited the queen-like dignity of her carriage, and showed to advantage the graceful contour of her slender throat. As her white hand rested for a moment on the antique urn (while Mabel with Power and Phil Brown were laughingly amusing themselves at the opposite end of the table), Tom thought her a beautiful "study" for Sorrow mourning over the ashes of faded Hope. The picture, however, only lasted a moment. For the fact of Tom's own attention being attracted by the same cause requiring him to withdraw his eyes, he found when he looked again that Miss Ray had assumed her usual cheerful serenity, and was busily attending to the wants of her guests. Tom was unable all this time to draw more than monosyllables from her, so thinking more than ever that paragons were a "peg" above him, he turned to Miss Brown, whose common sense remarks soon launched him on the stream of generalities.

Power excelled himself in the art of pleasing this evening. He *drew out* Mr. Ray and Miss Brown on Australian topics, and charmed them by the interest he evinced on every subject connected with the young colony. He plunged Mabel and Phil (it was impossible to get at one without the other) into the "Middle Ages," and satisfied the hungry soul of the former for such mouldy food, by drawing on the stores of his extensive historical acquisitions, embellished by illustrations derived from his recent travels, and adorned by that poetic eloquence which is the gift of study to

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youth and hope. Even "Aunt Esther," Mr. Ray's sister, appreciated Power's attention to her society on this evening; he heard many interesting little anecdotes of the childhood of Frances and Mabel, and the old lady's eyes beamed with delight when she saw the interest she excited in her listener by her simple narrations; and last, though not least (in her own estimation), he opened the door for Matty as she carried out the silver urn, and held it extended while she bore the tray that supported the celestial group; a circumstance that Miss Quick attributed to the capacity of her eloquent mouth for holding the wished for silver spoon.

There was but *one* who did not share Power's attention on this evening, and that was Miss Ray. True, Tom and she were seated at a table looking over some drawings, but the former lacked the means of exciting his companion's interest, and failed to be as successful in his attempts at conversation with Frances, as Power had been with her cousin. So poor Tom floundered like a fish out of water. He tried several times to "disperse himself" among the rest of the company, but everybody seemed to be happy enough without him. He began to find that being "second fiddle" in this social orchestra was not to his taste, especially when the charming voice that usually accompanied his instrument was forming part of an agreeable "trio" from which he was shut out. At last, as a sort of revenge, Tom proposed music, and politeness demanded a cessation of "talk" when Miss Ray's

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fingers delicately rambled over the keys of a superb "Erard." A little singing followed, and, notwithstanding efforts to promote cheerfulness on the part of Miss Ray and Tom, the evening seemed one of cross purposes to *four* of the company. No matter how they *looked*. Such is life. People like the Browns are generally a happy exception; they thought they spent a most delightful evening; they belonged to that class of mortals who float on the surface of society grasping its enjoyments as they pass along, not particularly seeking pleasure or avoiding pain; but dropping the latter like a "hot potato" when the fingers unconsciously close upon it. So Phil and his sister sought their respective pillows in happy anticipation of the morrow's pleasure, while as to the rest, Power pondered, Tom chafed, Mabel mused, and Frances sighed—as each sought the repose of night.

CHAPTER VI.

In spite of what moralists and divines may say, we do not think so meanly of "good intentions" and resolutions as they do, even when they fail; if the scaffolding is weak it is not always the fault of the workman. He thinks it secure, till it tumbles. If the road to a certain place is "paved with good intentions," it is not a bad road, though it leads in a wrong direction. Doubtless, it is better than no road at all.

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Before Power closed his eyes on the night preceding the day of the intended picnic, he made a resolution; he slept upon it; awoke with it; and to judge by his knit brow and compressed lips when he rose, determined to act upon it.

Tom's indifference, fate, chance, or whatever else we like to call it, had thrown a magnet in his way that swayed a heart hitherto steeled against female fascination, and made the iron strength of his soul, from its very nature, obey the charm that his enchantress held, unconscious to herself.

But the more that Power felt himself exalted by contact with so rare a spirit, the more he felt degraded in his own eyes, by having suffered himself to act so false a part.

What at first seemed no greater trespass than a sort of dramatic practical joke, now assumed the dimensions almost of a crime, and his resolution was—to avoid Miss Ray's society as much as was consistent with politeness during their stay at Raymount (which he now determined should be as brief as possible), and (of course) to root Miss Ray's image out of his heart, as it would be madness to aspire to her hand in his present circumstances; fruitless and dishonourable to try and gain her father's approbation; and hopeless, with regard to herself, that (if she knew all) having lost her esteem, he should win her affection.

Do we blame him for making this resolution, for paving the very path of the coming pic-nic, with

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good intentions? We boldly answer *No!* even before we know the result.

He began well.

Miss Ray was an early riser, and so was he since he came to Raymount. A smattering of botany was among his scientific pursuits, and his search for floral specimens peculiar to Australia interested him, while at Raymount. Miss Ray was an enthusiastic florist; so it was natural that Power and she often met in those exquisite fresh mornings that are so peculiar, and so *general* in our Australian climate.

Power rose late on this morning, and only came into the breakfast-room when all were seated. Phil, this morning, taking his "place," for the simple reason that Mabel chanced to be in the one below it.

When leaving the room Power asked Tom, as the ladies were to ride, would he accompany Miss Ray, to which Tom curtly answered, to "ride with her himself."

This reply shook his resolution a little, as if Tom or Phil did not accompany her, there would be nobody left but "Bob," Phil's brother; and he could not well leave her to Bob. The rest of the excursionists drove in conveyances of various descriptions. So, when the riding party left the gate, Mabel rode on, joined by Tom, and, to the latter's great annoyance, Phil. Bob was accompanied by his sister and a sentimental gentleman, a friend of the Brown's, freshly introduced; and Power took his place by Miss Ray, feeling that this was one of the "exceptions," that politeness

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required, and giving resolution the reins for a little, he got on in front of the party, and soon left them at a convenient distance.

As the conveyances were obliged to take a circuitous route to their destination, the riders determined on striking across the bush.

Tom made use of several stratagems to get rid of Phil, but was as yet unsuccessful. Power still kept in the van, so, "first come first served," we shall follow him for a little, as in the first place the privacy of the bush gave him an ample field to test his companion's character by his "common-sense" rules, and in the next place resolution might pace on evenly over the path paved twenty-fours before starting with "good intentions."

Their path wound through wooded avenues not too dense to allow of easy access along the track, the wild flowers twinkled beneath their feet, many of them of a star-like shape, yellow, white, and blue. The peppermint tree gave out a pleasant fragrance, and the wattle, with its plume-like branches of a delicate green was already, like Dickens' mangle boy, "bursting into buttons," whose clusters yielded an agreeable perfume, while its stem and branches, studded with its amber-coloured gum shining in the sun's early rays, gave a fairy-like lustre to the lilliputian forest through which they strayed.

"This is perfectly Arcadian," said Power, enthusiastically. "Look at that purple creeper (the sarsaparilla), how regally it drapes the tree that supports it

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—the graceful and beautiful, the firm and strong, how they need each other. What were the one without the other?"

"I feel," continued he, after a pause, "like a bird of passage that has followed spring through the world; now, when winter should be approaching, behold the spring!"

"I suppose you mean to pass your next spring in Ireland, and so avoid our hot winds," said Miss Ray.

"Oh! I am not so great a devotee of the spring," said he, "as to go fourteen thousand miles to meet her; and yet it is a sweet season—Spring and Hope, youth and its talisman. Ah! why is youth so often doomed to flutter from "tree to tree," like the "bird in the story," in quest of the talisman so often within reach, so seldom grasped."

"When grasped it is no longer a Talisman," said Miss Ray, thoughtfully; "the charm is then gone."

"Not to those who can read it aright," replied Power, gazing into her confiding eyes. We must possess the key," continued he, confidently, "else the cypher is useless."

Power's horse gave a slight stumble, so he tightened the reins.

Miss Ray pulled a wattle blossom, "I have heard," she observed, "that Englishmen say our native flowers yield no perfume; do you not perceive the fragrance of the wattle blossom?"

"Decidedly," replied Power. "I am sure future generations will immortalize it, as we have done the

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hawthorn; but your country being in its infancy, it is with you at present the blossom of *Hope;* the hawthorn with us is the flower of memory."

Saying this he pulled a delicate spray.

At this moment Tom's group emerged from the trees at some distance. "See," said Power, "your cousin has donned the regal purple; she is installed Queen of the 'bush.' Behold her emblem in her hat, will you allow me, Miss Ray, to fasten this in yours?"

Frances took the golden blossom from his hand, and carelessly fastened it in her hat.

"It really becomes you," said he (as if anything would not become her just then.) "Remember, it is the blossom of *Hope*," said he in a low voice, as Tom rode up rather quickly to join them.

Power's horse seemed to slip on the uneven ground, so pulling in the reins again and giving the animal a stroke of his whip, he continued to ride on slowly, waiting for the rest to come up.

The whole party rode on together for some time, as long as the nature of the ground permitted them to do so; but the path getting narrow, and the trees denser and more intricate, they were forced again to separate.

Power continued, as before, in advance, followed by Miss Brown and her escort, Tom bringing up the rear with Mabel; for at this moment Phil was seen riding hastily across the bush in an opposite direction.

It seemed that Mabel having accidentally complained of thirst, Tom proffered his services to search for

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some water, upon which Phil, who knew every inch of the ground for miles around, said he knew where to get some, and possessing a pic-nic glass (we have everything in these days) at once rode away to fetch the desired draught.

Mabel had done her best to detain him, but it was of no use.

They rode on slowly and in silence for a few minutes, at length Tom said, "Why were you so *very* anxious to detain Mr. Brown? (Tom fancying his conversation must have been as tiresome to Mabel as to himself). "Surely we can dispense with his company for a little."

"*We?*" said his companion gravely. "*I* do not want to dispense with Mr. Brown's company."

"Well *I* do," said Tom firmly; "but," said he, while his face flushed, "perhaps it is *I* who am the bore; if so, *my* company shall be quickly *dispensed with.*"

"I did not insinuate that either of you was a bore," said Mabel, laughing; "but Mr. Brown is very good-natured, and I would not offend him for the world."

"Can she like him?" thought Tom to himself. He then said aloud,

"There is an old and trite saying, Miss Ray, which I think applicable just now, 'two are company, but three trumpery;' either Mr. Brown or I must be trumpery."

"I do not see the necessity of it, Mr. Power."

"Well, *I do*, Miss Ray. "Oh," continued he, with greater vehemence, "if you only knew how I prize

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your companionship you would not willingly debar me from it — unless," and here he gave another searching glance, "unless *another* can afford you the pleasure I am unable to give," he continued sadly.

Mabel's face crimsoned; the sun at all events was shining full upon her, so she drew down her veil.

Tom waited in silence a few moments, as if he expected a reply, but there was no answer.

"You prefer Mr. Brown's company then?" said Tom, striking with his whip at a branch close by.

"If you *insist* on believing it, Mr. Power, I have nothing to say."

Tom endeavoured to read her countenance through her veil; he then said, "I do not *insist* on entertaining the idea, Miss Ray; but you could banish it if you chose."

"When people create phantoms," said Mabel, half in jest, and half in earnest, "they should be let haunt them for a punishment."

While Mabel was speaking, Phil was seen advancing with the water. He soon drew near, his face glowing with exercise and his eyes beaming with pleasure, at being able to do her even so poor a service.

Mabel took the glass from him, and thanked him, "It is delightfully cool," said she, when she had partaken of the draught.

"Yes," said Phil, "the sun does not often shine on the spot, where I got that water; it is like a fairy

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lake, a fairy lake bordered by the tiniest flowers. You must come and see it some day, Miss Ray."

Mabel had again drawn down her veil, so Tom could not *translate* her glance as she replied—

"Oh! we have no fairies here, Mr. Brown, we are too new and fresh to be haunted," here she turned pleasantly to Tom; "but," she added, addressing Phil, "if you promise me a *bona-fide* fairy I shall certainly go."

"I can only promise *one*," said Phil, with sudden inspiration, "*Queen Mab*. You know what we all called you when you came to our wild bush from the civilised regions where fairies grow."

"Oh! if *I* went I should *haunt* you, I fear, ever afterwards," said Mabel with a faint smile.

"I should like to be haunted *by you*," said Phil softly, bending down and trying to pierce her veil with his eyes.

"Do you think we are near the Quarries, Mr. Brown?" said Mabel, trying to change the conversation.

"Not above half a mile, now, I should think," Phil answered.

Tom, during this colloquy, had been riding along thoughtfully. It struck him that Mabel was too friendly with Phil, more so than she ought to have been, *he* decided. It was evident there had been food for the green-eyed monster, however; for when Tom heard they were within so short a distance of the place of rendezvous, he said hastily:

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"I shall go and offer my services to the ladies, they will be in want of help to unload the hampers." He then doffed his hat rather proudly to Mabel, rode away slowly for a few minutes, and then cantered away as fast as the nature of the ground would permit.

Tom was in time to be of use. All the "hands" were busily engaged—the gentlemen unloading, the ladies arranging. So the banquet was tastefully spread; the dishes ornamented with spoils from the bush in the shape of pretty wild flowers and evergreens; and if the *table* could not "groan with the weight of the feast," the ground ought to have rejoiced, for surely no "Marble Hall" ever looked so attractive as that arched diningroom of nature's massive carving, with its wide portals, its blue canopy, and its damask carpet, on which were spread, Eastern fashion, the dainty viands, the crystal conserves, and the laughing fruit; while the pie-crust moulding and ornamentation of our friend the cook, whose designs in that branch of science would not have disgraced the "Art Journal," stood out here and there like modest temples (dedicated to the genius of taste), whose fate, alas! like those made of sterner stuff was to crumble beneath the hand of the destroyer and become the picturesque ruins of a gastric battle-field. All were seated; hunger proved a better sauce than Hervey's, and the merry jest "spicier" seasoning than those "black spirits and white" in the shape of pepper, that tickle our throats and bring tears to our eyes:

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Dinner over, of course "Toasts" were proposed, duly answered by young gentlemen "who were unaccustomed to public speaking," that memorable sentence being the only one got through creditably, the rest of the speech, from its lamentable weakness and lameness, having to be propped by *cheers* from the good-natured listeners.

It is a pity that our youths are not drilled in after-dinner speeches at school; themes such as "the ladies," "the Press," or some popular event in politics, would never be wanting to train the "young idea" in that direction. It would redound more to a man's credit in after life, than the fact of his having so often told his admiring friends that his "name was Norval on the Grampian Hills;" that "To be or not to be" was the question; that he was an "Orphan Boy," or that "Sleep was Nature's sweet restorer."

We are not fond of digressions, but our nerves have so often been lacerated by pity for the "unaccustomed-to-public-private speakers," that we could not omit to "point a moral," even though we may fail to "adorn a tale," when we had the opportunity.

When the excursionists had sufficiently rested themselves, the next step proposed was the ascent of the rocky eminence in order to obtain the view already described.

As there were several ways by which the summit might be reached, and on different sides, each pair or group, as the case might be, chose their own path. Power, having a vague feeling that he had given

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resolution a sort of "half-holiday," and thinking (as the day was broken in upon) he might as well yield up the remainder with a good grace; with a sigh resigned himself to happiness *for this one day only*, and accordingly chose one of the least frequented tracks.

Phil escorted Mabel, alone, to his great delight; the remainder of the party kept pretty much in the same order as they had come, with the exception of Tom, who, like the Irish member, had to "pair off" by himself, and very indifferent company he found himself. He continued to wander zig-zag over the devious paths, with a general notion that he was expected to go to the top, but *why* he was expected to go, puzzled him, as who cared whether he went or not? However, he gradually ascended, and when he had nearly reached the summit, had the gratification of seeing Mabel assisted by Phil from a rather perilous position; a place where the loose soil made her footing unsteady, and almost forced her companion to be under the agreeable necessity of putting his arm around her waist, in order to land her on the top with common safety.

Seeing this, poor Tom ducked his head, descended midway, and began zig-zagging again; as he was not in a humour for meeting people and talking about things in general, he chose the least frequented path he could find. Leaving the murmur of voices behind him, at length he came upon a spot where he was almost sure of solitude, because the track both above

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and below it was one which though comparatively easy for a gentleman to ascend, would be rather uncomfortable for a lady. As Tom was about to take its bearings, behold, Power and Miss Ray on the portion above him, slowly ascending, the former anticipating every rough step that lay in his companion's way, by making her path as smooth as his vigilance would permit, and the latter seemingly quite contented with the proceeding!

Tom was a little startled at the situation. He thought that Miss Ray, *naturally*, he said to himself with bitterness, would accept Power as an admirer in his character of heir to a large estate, and of course *fancy* she liked him; this much he had settled to his own satisfaction on the day of the fishing excursion. He had also endeavoured to sound his friend's inclinations on that day, but Power's apparent indifference, and his zeal in his (Tom's) behalf, satisfied him as to the state of Power's own feelings in the case.

But now, was he trifling with Miss Ray? or, if not, to what would all this tend? If he won her real, or fancied affection, the *dénouement* would be awkward; what would Mr. Ray think? A deception—Tom instinctively felt—when it is cleared up with *éclat*, is all very well; but when it is the reverse, it 's all very ill! But Power in love! it was too absurd to think of, besides he never counted upon Power's weakness. Of course not, it would spoil all. In fact, Tom felt annoyed and uncomfortable. He had got himself

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stuck in a sort of moral bog, into which it was easier to get in than to get out. "But," said he to himself, "I must see this farce played out." Saying this, he plunged somewhere out of sight, and thence got to a part of the rock near the summit, whence he could see without being seen; accordingly in a few moments he saw Power climb to the top, and putting out his hand gently, raise up Miss Ray. They advanced then to a spot whence the view could be seen to the greatest advantage, their faces being so placed as to be seen distinctly by Tom.

Miss Ray by her gestures, was pointing out the objects of the greatest interest in the landscape to Power, who (she thought) was examining them with his usual critical appreciation, while *Tom* could see that Power was all the time gazing with a look of such intense admiration at the beautiful speaker, that if Hong Kong or the desert of Sahara was before him, it was all one provided only *she* was there to point out their defects or their perfections.

Tom's only comment was a low whistle. He *dove* again, as the Americans say, emerged in a totally different direction, and at last leaped on to the summit thinking, and in this he was not very far wrong, that the greatest solitude would be found amongst the crowd.

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CHAPTER VII.

The party arrived at home before the "shades of even closed around them," some went direct to their own domiciles, others availed themselves of a general invitation to spend the evening at Raymount, on their return from the excursion.

Among the latter were, of course, the Browns. The ladies withdrew to change their riding habits for evening costume; and on the stairs stood Matty, with lamp in hand, the priestess of the toilette, ready to sacrifice any young lady's head on the altar of fashion, a duty her fingers were eager to perform but one which her own young ladies made a sinecure; therefore she was all the more anxious to manipulate any head that came in her way, and her designs were generally successful as far as the extreme of fashion warranted, but whether her "capital" suited the fair column on which it rested was beyond Matty or her *manipulatee's* notions of taste to ascertain.

Frances and Mabel arrayed themselves in snowy white, trimmed with a delicate green. They looked like lilies with their native foliage about them. The rest of the ladies were attired in colours suitable to their several complexions, and all looked, when grouped in the drawingroom, like a charming bouquet freshly gathered.

Tea over, there was of course dancing, the exertions of the day being seldom taken into account when Terpsichore is literally "on the carpet."

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There was something so radiant about the beauty of Frances on this evening, that had a visible halo encircled her head, one of the party at least, would not have considered it out of place. Mabel's beauty was more subdued; both girls seemed to have gained the one touch to their loveliness that each required.

Power did not dance mnch, but his eyes seemed to do duty for his feet, as they followed his divinity about the room most industriously, perhaps he was making a compromise with resolution.

Tom was grave, but kept an eye quietly on Mabel and Phil. The former treated Phil as she always had done, with a kind of friendly familiarity, and accordingly Phil looked supremely happy.

Singing being proposed, Tom asked Miss Ray for "Has sorrow thy young days shaded?" Granting his request, she was led to the piano by Tom, who constituted himself her page-turner, secretly deeming his situation a good post for observing Phil's attention to Mabel, and her acceptance of it, and also for trying to discover how deeply Power had fallen into "the pit of Love."

The song was sung very touchingly; so much so, that the listeners had the good taste when it was ended not to break the spell it occasioned by hackneyed phrases of admiration. Tom's earnest "Thank you!" being the only comment for some time.

At length the sentimental young gentleman remarked —"Pretty idea that, about the Talisman."

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Power and Frances exchanged glances.

"I'd have brought the bird down with a rifle," said Bob Brown, who was a sportsman and a good shot.

There were no rifles in those days, said his sister.

"Well, there were bows and arrows at all events," replied Bob.

"Cupid's," observed the sentimental young gentleman, with a glance that went direct to the left side of Miss Brown's—buckle.

"Exactly," said Phil, rubbing his hands. "If *I* had that bow and arrow, wouldn't I bring down the bird and catch the Talisman."

"Perhaps you'd catch a Tartar, Mr. Brown. Those Talismans often possessed a dangerous power," said Mabel. This produced a general laugh, in which Tom joined.

"No, I don't think I should," said good-natured Phil, looking Mabel full in the face. "I'm sure I shouldn't."

"Not, perhaps, if the arrow were tipped with gold," said Tom, looking disdainfully at Phil.

"Or *brass*," replied Phil, colouring, and looking defiantly at Tom.

This produced another laugh, in which Phil joined.

"I think," said Frances, "Mabel's definition of the 'Talisman' is a true one, it seems to have a dangerous power. Suppose we 'drop it' as the bird did at last."

In the laugh that followed this all joined, and good humour was restored—outwardly.

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"That last arrow hit its mark," said Bob to a friend in a low voice. "I was afraid of a 'scene.'"

"Not in the presence of ladies," whispered the other; "but doesn't young Tom Power carry himself high, considering he has not as much (I hear) as would jingle on a tombstone?"

"*Rather!*" said Phil, who had joined the group and overheard the first part of the remark, though uttered in so low a tone.

"The golden arrow grazed your cheek a little, Phil," said Bob to his brother, "but the brazen one went *home.*"

"Well, he was the first to shoot," said Phil, "so let the arrow stick."

But the shaft rankled in another breast. Mabel felt Tom's sarcasm was intended for *her* as well as Phil; nevertheless, she steeled herself to bear this along with other "home" thrusts she got from time to time. She had *a purpose,* and she would not swerve from it; so, let the arrows of sarcasm and unkindness be hurled at her from all quarters, until she became a sort of moral porcupine! No matter, she would bear them all, until at last the very arrows that were meant to offend her, would become themselves the means of defence against the unkind world. Poor child!"

"Those laugh best who laugh last."

Phil's complacency at having made a lucky "hit" set him at his ease, and his hilarity continued some time after that of the others had ceased, and then only died away like distant thunder—a faint peal at

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intervals reverberating along the walls of the apartment—his eyes fairly jumped in his head for the remainder of the evening. He kept one hand as if by an effort, pressed firmly against his heart, as one keeps his thumb forcibly upon the cork of a soda-water bottle when the wires are cut, in order to keep the effervescing contents under due control.

Tom looked at him as he might have done at a dancing bear, to which his keeper allowed rather more liberty than he (Tom) approved. His amusement being restrained by a vague feeling of uneasiness, lest the animal should take it into his head to *hug* some of the company, before he could interpose to save them from his embrace.

CHAPTER VIII.

Matty, not losing sight of the conspiracy that she fancied existed against the interests of her young mistresses, took every opportunity of watching the chance interviews that occurred between Tom and Darby, and they were not a few; for, independent of the former's interest in horses in general, he drew from Darby, among some other family items, a few particulars of Mabel's history,—heard how she left England "a winsome wee thing" after the death of her parents, and that of a brother and sister whose end was hastened by the pressure of genteel poverty. Mr. Ray knew nothing of this till it was too late—a

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letter from his dying brother consigning his pet (she was the youngest) to his generosity.

Mabel, Darby insinuated, was welcomed as a daughter by Mr. Ray, and as a sister by Frances, who was only a year or two her senior, and the two girls grew up together in the closest friendship.

During those conversations, Darby who was of course interested in Ireland and something of a politician in his way, had frequently alluded to the Fenian disturbances then going on in the "Green Isle," and Tom in return for the information he *drew*, good-naturedly gave Darby the *cream* of some of his father's letters, fragments of which by the way were often thrown into his (Tom's) grate, and Matty, to do her justice, kept Tom's mantel-piece and fire-place in first-rate order.

So the "Fenian" fragments of the letters supplying the gaps in the conversations, of which Matty obtained snatches at intervals, the girl hatched a very pretty plot in her busy brain, and settled, quite as a matter beyond doubt, that young Tom certainly, and perhaps his friend, were Fenians in disguise, and that Darby was aiding and abetting them to escape detection. To say truth, Miss Quick had very hazy notions as to what Fenians really were; if she had any idea on the subject, it was that they were a sort of Hibernian bushrangers, and that the Irish were "mostly" Fenians. However, a truce having been established between her and Mumby, she resolved to apply to that gentleman for a clearer in-

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sight on the subject that was floating in the vapours of her brain.

Accordingly, one morning she broached the matter to that functionary, who replied:—

"Fenians, Miss Matilda, are a bad lot, the worst and most numerous class of Irishmen; they would murder the Queen and Royal family (if they could), blow up the parliament houses, massacre every *prodestant* in the United Kingdom, and set up a *papish* king with a shamrock on his head for a crown, and a shillelagh in his hand for a sceptre, and (I hear) it 's a pity they're not let do it, for their end would be, like their own *kill canny* cats, that they'd eat one another till nothing but their tails was left."

"Mercy on us, you terrify me!" said Matty, turning pale.

"It 's true, Miss Matilda," continued he, "that unhappy country will call down the vengeance of heaven in fire and brimstone on its head (like Sodom and Gomorrah) if it does not repent in sackcloth and ashes. It would be a mercy if the waves of the Atlantic would sweep over it, like Noah's deluge—only we can never have another flood; look at the rainbow, Miss, and it will tell you that—and wash it off the face of the earth."

Mumby was seated at the head of the table on a sort of high office stool, which he had chosen to raise him when sitting, over the heads of the other servants; as his legs were not long enough to reach the ground, his feet generally clasped the props of

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the stool, and with his short stiff hair erect—he always ran his fingers through it when about to "hold forth," —he looked not unlike a cockatoo on its perch; a similarity the quick-witted Matty was not slow to discover, and accordingly the name stuck to him *behind his back.*

"Yes," resumed he complacently, "as we can't have another deluge it would be well for 'unhappy Ireland' if the earth was to open and swallow her up. There 's nothing against earthquakes in the Bible as a punishment for national sins."

Darby had come in during the latter part of this peroration to light his pipe. The old Irishman, a devout Catholic, looking upon the orator as a black heretic, generally let him have his say unmolested, thinking a man holding such *emphatic* opinions as Mumby from time to time enunciated, quite beyond the pale of argument; Mumby dealing pretty freely in the *meteorological* imagery of Scripture, loving to expatiate on the fire and brimstone reserved for unbelievers in the Mumby-onian theology, and revelling in the earthquakes, thunders, lightning, and hailstones reserved for outsiders—a numerous class consisting of all those unlucky individuals who differed from himself.

Darby then thinking Mumby was only "sarmonizing," as he called it, paid no attention to him, not having heard Matty's question or its immediate answer, but when he comprehended that "unhappy Ireland" was the doomed country reserved for the

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"besom of destruction," the waves of the Atlantic, and the hungry stomach of mother earth, he turned and faced Mumby, brandishing his pipe like a shillelagh, and thundered—

"Ye black Saxon, ye foul-mouthed heretick, how dare ye *thrajuice* a dacent counthry *behind its back*. If ever I hear a word agin' it pass your teeth, I'll wring that beak of yours till ye won't know yerself nor the mother that bore you, if it was worth her while to rise from her grave to see sich an object."

Poor Mumby's eyelids quivered, and his little round eyes shot sparks of fire, but his whole body thrilled so with anger he was unable to speak.

"It was Matty asking about the Fenians," put in the cook, who strove to throw oil on the troubled waters. "I don't think Mr. Mumby meant Ireland outright."

"I heard enough," said Darby, "to make *him* shut his mouth for the time to come, but as to the *Faynians* (they're come since my time), I've heard the master say, and he may be right as he is a *knowledgeable* man, that they were first a pack of Amerykan Fillybusters, come over to Ireland to set it by the ears, more betoken they've found a mare's nest there, be all accounts. I don't like any sacret undherhand doin's meself. If there was a fair open faction fight now, between England and Ireland, or the Saxon and the *Selt*, as they call us—I suppose because they *sould* us in ould times—I wouldn't back out of it, ould as I am. Didn't my father hide

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a '98 man from the English sojers, and didn't meself (a young gossoon at the time), show him where to hide, *an' crep* into the hay with him. Though the serjeant poked it with his baynet, yet I didn't cry out, though I thought meself within an inch of my life, and the man got off scot free.

"Well, well," continued he shaking his head, "I never thought I'd live to see the day to hear an ould raven croak about my counthry like that miserable bird o' prey there on its perch. The counthry," said Darby with enthusiasm, "that the people that do be writin' books praise up to the skies for beauty! Didn't the *grate O'Connel* call it 'the first flower of the earth, and first jim of the say;' and so the earth was to come and swally up its own sweet flower, and the *say* was to come and wash away its own darlin' jewel of jewels? Oh, wirra, wirra!"

Darby again turned to Mumby, and brandished his pipe so close to that individual's nose, that a spark flew out, and alighted on that respectable feature.

Mumby, who all this time had been utterly unable to speak from intense passion, now stood up, stretched out his arms and legs, and quivered before Darby like a fighting cock; the Irishman, being six feet in his brogues, looked down at him with supreme contempt, coolly re-lighted his pipe, gave two or three engine-like puffs, and then with a whistle and a snort steamed out of the kitchen. "The reprobate! the rebel!" said Mumby, still keeping his threatening

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attitude, "I'll denounce him to the authorities for favouring Fenians, I'll——"

"Oh, come, sit down," said the cook, "it's my belief if you both had your breakfasts this would not have happened; Darby only stands up for his country, and small blame to him."

The savoury fumes getting into Mumby's beak made him listen to reason for the present, so he got upon his perch, stretched out a claw-like hand for some bread, and then, putting it into his mouth, nibbled it like fury.

Matty sat looking at him with a painful demureness of countenance—she was afraid to smile, lest in his wrath he might prod her with the fork he held in his hand; but the very endeavour to repress her mirth only made it burst forth with greater vehemence; she at first only uttered a sort of prolonged titter, and then with a crash fairly broke out into a genuine rattling burst of laughter!

Mumby, with smouldering anger, looked at her while holding a piece of meat on his fork; he then darted the piece into his mouth, and held the fork prongs upwards on the table, ready to do any duty required of it.

"It's along of your inquisitiveness this has come about," said the cook to Matty. "What business have you to know what Fenians means?"

"One would think to hear you talk," replied Matty, "that our tongues was given for nothing but to *taste* with."

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"Yours wasn't at any rate," said the cook. "But a Fenian of all things in the world! Why *I'd* have no more *idee* of a Fenian than a Bunyip."

"By the way, Mr. Mumby," said Matty, defiantly (having gained her point about the Fenians, she did not mind breaking the truce), "as you know everything, perhaps, you could tell me if you ever saw a Bunyip?"

Saying this Matty sat looking at him with a comical smile. It was too much for a man whose patience had been so sorely tried as his had been that morning, so edging his hand to a plate that was beside him, on which lay a compact round potato, he aimed it so suddenly and dexterously that it struck the girl right upon the ear, shivering her glass earring with the force with which it was sent.

"Take that," he said, "to punish your inquisitiveness. The vile root was never put to a better purpose."

The poor potato was thus made a "double debt to pay," Mumby making the favourite esculent of the Emerald Isle the weapon of his vengeance, and with it chastising the delicate organ whose "zeal for knowledge outran its discretion."

Before the words he uttered were quite out of his mouth he had flown across the kitchen, but Matty quickly seizing a larger specimen of the "vile root" rushed after him, and had the satisfaction of seeing it alight with a crash upon his pate. She then darted past him, and her agile form soon vanished into the

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upper regions: her form, but not her voice, for wafted to Mumby from the (to him) unknown heights, came the appropriate speech—

"'One good turn deserves another.' 'Tit for tat is very good sauce,' more especially for a *Irish stew*, Mr. Mumby!"

CHAPTER IX.

OUR friends the Powers had been invited by a gentleman, whom they met at the pic-nic, to spend a few days at his house, which was situated near the ranges, in order to enjoy some snipe-shooting, or any other sport appreciated by country gentlemen.

Accordingly, the two friends started some days after the late excursion to the quarries, intending, when they returned, to make their stay at Raymount as short as possible, and afterwards proceed to Melbourne.

Each was glad of a brief change, in spite of—and, paradoxical as it may appear, on account of—the attraction which made Raymount secretly dear to both; yet they could not but acknowledge to one another that their situation was becoming critical.

They, however, spent a few days pleasantly, drowning an anxiety they could scarcely repress, in the exhilarating mountain sport.

Upon their return they found the young ladies absent from home, as they too had in the interim been

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paying a country visit, which usually lasted some days.

Mr. Ray had invited one or two gentlemen to Raymount, in compliment to his guests, during the absence of his daughter and niece, who only returned an evening or two previous to the day fixed upon for the departure of the Powers.

It was the last evening—quiet and sad—quiet, for the other guests had departed, and the tranquillity succeeding the bustle of the previous month had all the charm of contrast and the repose of re-action; sad, for no matter how our fair friends felt towards their guests, yet when we must part from those with whom we have gone pleasantly along life's stream, even for a month, we must experience, if we have human feelings, regret, when our friends turn their faces to the opposite bank, and leave us alone on the deserted side.

Yes, it was the last evening. Power would have confessed all to Miss Ray but for Tom's urgent solicitations to the contrary. The latter hoped, in spite of all that had passed, to win Mabel yet in his assumed character. This accomplished, the rest (he argued) would wind up as happily as the final scene in a comedy, or the sensational chapter of a three-volume novel. Everybody would forgive everybody, and all would end well.

Power had some confidence himself in Tom's success. The former had long ago guessed his friend's secret, in fact Tom's nature was too demonstrative to

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allow of much ambiguity in the matter, but his success with Mabel, owing to Phil's rivalry, and his apparent penniless condition, was a subject on which Power with all his penetration would not pronounce.

The family were assembled in a small apartment, which opened out into the garden; it had been chosen on account of its aspect, for the purpose of a breakfast and tea room, being cool in the summer mornings and warm in the winter evenings, but owing to its size, seldom used but in the absence of visitors.

However, as the guests had now dwindled down to two, the little household had resumed their ordinary routine. How glad Power and Tom would have been to have felt themselves "at home" in their own characters in this charming little room, with the western sun lighting up its tastefully arranged furniture, and throwing a gleam of subdued radiance around the forms of the young girls as they passed to and fro in their domestic avocations. There was just the one thing wanted to make their happiness perfect; there was no Phil there to come between Tom and his sunshine, and somehow Power in this small unpretending room did not feel himself "so far apart" from the object from which not the "iron hand of Destiny" but the golden barriers of society were about to separate him.

Mr. Ray had gone to his study to pore over some papers, and Aunt Esther to have most likely a nap, and Power, knowing that it was his friend's desire to have an interview with Mabel free from interruption

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had strolled out to have a saunter through the grounds hoping that Frances might be intercepted, should she leave the room before she had time to shut herself up in her "boudoir," like a snail in its shell.

Mabel was seated in the recess of a bow-window which faced the sunset sky at her embroidery frame; her subject was a parting scene between a knight of the Middle Ages and his "ladye love." She delighted to sit there while the sun was moving the "dissolving views" of his grand panorama, before night's curtain fell upon the scene.

Tom sat looking at her, while the red light touched her waving hair and deepened the colors of the picture on which she was engaged. He knew she loved those sketches and legends of the "olden time" and this little touch of romance in her character charmed him. He fancied himself for the moment one of those knights of old—Glory their only pursuit, Love their sole reward; and he thought to himself if he could only part *thus*, how "merrily" he would "ride away." Yet, how was it that hitherto she had contrived to elude him? He could hardly think Phil was the cause. Poor Tom, his pet ambition was to win a heart! He knew he could have blood horses in his stables, and a stylish "turn out" in his coachhouse; Raphaelites and pre-Raphaelites, gems of art from a Teniers to a Turner in his gallery; Persian carpets and "Buhl" cabinets in his drawingroom, but he knew he could not *buy* a heart. So he simply wanted a *heart for a heart.*

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Frances had just left the apartment, and Tom continued to study Mabel and her work. At length he drew his chair opposite her frame, and sat down, the action preluded with a little sigh—

"I wonder," said he, taking up the copy, "had I lived in those days should I have been so fortunate as to find a lady who would embroider a device on my banner, such as this knight doubtless waved enthusiastically in the field."

"I dare say," answered Mabel, "the lady would not be difficult to find, seeing that embroidery was so general an accomplishment in those days."

"Yes, I am aware it was," said Tom; "but I should not prize the device unless it was a labour of love."

"I suppose that would be ascertained by the knight, or rather follow as a matter of course," said Mabel, smiling.

"I think you would have embroidered a banner nicely," said Tom, if you lived in those days.

"When one is in Rome, one does as the Romans do."

"Let me see," mused Tom, "what my device should have been if I were the knight, and, for the sake of illustration, you were the ladye."

"Do you think you would have been a 'Red-Cross knight'?" suggested Mabel.

"No," replied Tom, "I fear I should not have been religious enough for that."

"Well then you should have had something more warlike—a lion or leopard; a hawk or heron; a hand and dagger?" Mabel continued, "a ——"

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"No," said Tom, thoughtfully, "I should have a heart."

"With a dart stuck in it," said Mabel, merrily.

"A heart," continued Tom, not minding the interruption "in a scale."

"That would be like a butcher's shop," said Mabel, with a shudder. "Should it bleed?"

"Cupid holding the balance," continued Tom, submitting to her interruptions, but not answering them, "and the Goddess of Fortune, standing by with a golden weight, ready to throw into the other scale, to equalize the beam—but Cupid, with head averted, should stand ready with bow and arrow to aim at something Fortune could not see; and the motto on his wing should be, *A heart for a heart.*"

"That would be an elaborate device," said Mabel, with a slight flush.

"Do you think you should have worked it for your knight?" said Tom.

"Well," returned she pleasantly, "if he were *sans peur et sans reproche*, I might have considered the matter."

"Even if he were *sans six sous?*" added Tom, with an emotion he could not repress.

"I fear," said Mabel, her colour deepening, but yet with an attempt at raillery, "that in that case we should not be *san souci.*"

"The *souci* might come if the *six sous* were multiplied billions of times," argued Tom.

"It would in that case be less hard to bear," said she, with a slightly perceptible sigh.

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"What do you think of the motto?" said Tom.

"It is a fair one," returned Mabel, "for the *knight*."

"And the ladye: is it not as fair for her?" continued Tom.

"Well, if he were killed, how should she manage *sans six sous?*" said Mabel, smiling.

"I suppose she never thought of that when she gave 'a heart for a heart,'" said Tom, a little nettled; "but," continued he, "they had generous hearts in those days!"

Mabel's face flushed again.

"Then you would not adopt the motto?" urged Tom, pertinaceously.

"How you cross-question," said Mabel, a little nervously. "One would think I was on my trial for some crime, and that you were determined to bring me in 'Guilty.'"

"So you are. Oh, Miss Ray, your heart 's on trial, and my happiness awaits the verdict. Dare I hope for 'a heart for a heart'?"

Mabel rose with head averted. "I must go," she said.

"Not till I have an answer, Miss Ray; you cannot misunderstand me." Tom looked pleadingly at the picture, the ladye with one hand on the knight's shoulder and her head on his breast, bent in all the agony of grief. "We are about to part Miss Ray—say only," said he, putting out his hand, "that you approve of my motto."

Mabel was silent, her head still averted.

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"Must we part in utter silence?" said Tom. "Good bye, then, Miss Ray."

Mabel put out her hand, her head still averted. Tom tried to see her face.

She put her hand hurriedly in his, with a faint, "Good bye."

Tom looked wistfully at the pretty hand as it lay in his broad palm.

"May I keep it?" said he, softly.

Mabel withdrew her hand hastily, and rushing past Tom, fled from the apartment.

CHAPTER X.

"LIKE a snail in its shell," said Power, as he continued to watch the door of the apartment in which he had left Miss Ray. He stooped down to examine a flower, and in doing so perceived a snail *without* a shell. "I think the snails are not domestic about here," said he; "I have at least never seen one 'keep house.' I must ask Miss Ray wherefore."

As the young lady did not emerge from the door leading into the garden, Power resolved to change his tactics, so going round by the front door, he entered the hall; he had a specimen of the shell-less snail in his hand. Not many minutes elapsed before he encountered Miss Ray, her foot on the stair step ready to be lost in the many windings that led to that mysterious "boudoir" whence he might not find it

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easy to uncoil her; hence his simile, though in this instance the snail was not an apt illustration.

"Can you tell me, Miss Ray," said Power, "why it is that the snails are without their shells hereabouts?"

"I have never seen them with shells," said Miss Ray. "I suppose the warmth of this climate renders them unnecessary."

"Happy creatures," replied Power, "to require neither houses nor furniture, clothing nor etceteras: subsisting on the delicate leaves of the fairest flowers; no doubt they 'live happy, and die contented.'"

Power said this in a tone half mocking, half serious.

"I have heard of people wishing to 'be a butterfly, born in a bower,'" replied Frances, "but I never heard of anyone envying a snail."

"The evening is beautiful out of doors, Miss Ray; suppose we go in search of a snail, with 'his house on his back.'"

Frances took down a garden hat that was on a rack close by, and left the house accompanied by Power.

"I am afraid, Mr. Power, our search will be vain. It is evident our snails are of a gipsy nature, loving no roof but the sky."

"A snail without a shell," said Power, in a sort of soliloquy, "is like a man without possessions. What is a man now-a-days without a house (on his back)—a cypher. A booby with some thousands, is more courted, flattered——"

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"Not respected," said Frances.

"Yes, respected," said Power, "by nine-tenths of mankind."

"Nor loved," Miss Ray continued.

"Yes, loved, by ninety-nine-hundredths of womankind."

The sudden substitution of sex produced a laugh.

"You pay us a compliment, Mr. Power."

"Put the case to yourself, Miss Ray; suppose for the sake of argument, you had two suitors of equal rank and birth—the one rich, the other poor—all other things being equal in a general way, and their chances of securing your favour in the beginning identical. Would not the 'prestige' of wealth—the influence it brings—the homage it commands, insensibly sway you to listen with more favour to the rich suitor, rather than to his poorer rival?"

"I should only consult my heart," said Frances in a low voice.

"Even hearts mislead sometimes. The fancy," continued Power, "is first led captive by visions of future happiness which wealth can procure, the heart yields in sympathy, and so riches win the day."

"But why *need* fancy be led captive, Mr. Power? It is not our strongest faculty and should not govern the citadel."

"It *should* not but it *does* generally," said Power after a pause.

"Then it is badly governed," said Miss Ray.

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"Granted; but you see," replied Power, "that this Governor Fancy, or fancy governor, being enlisted on the side of the rich man, I end where I began by saying that 'Wealth wins the day.'"

"But you charitably allow some exceptions," said Frances laughing, "for the sake of—Womankind."

"It is possible I might," said Power thoughtfully. But were I like this houseless snail," continued he, holding the shelterless animal in his hand, "dare I hope that so rare an 'exception' would condescend to parley with me, much less allow me to enter the sacred citadel of her heart?"

"Your simile as regards yourself is hardly a happy one," said Frances laughing, and glancing half bashfully at Power, and then at the slimy creature wriggling in his hand.

"I spoke metaphorically," replied Power, smiling in his turn.

"As regards the *house*," said Miss Ray.

"That is all I want to illustrate," said he seriously.

Frances wondered at what he meant by all this figurative conversation; he spoke so pointedly about "the house," it was evident he had some poor lover in view. It must refer to Tom, thought she, whose attentions to Mabel were unmistakeable; or was he testing her affections with regard to himself—the jealousy of love—perhaps fearing the rivalry of wealth. But, why? Her own fortune was not inconsiderable—for womankind; thus far there was equality. She was puzzled.

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"To drop metaphor," said Power, flinging the snail to a distance, and leaving the precincts of the garden, "do you think it possible in this land of gold, where the treasure is burrowed for under, battled for above, ground,—prized beyond birth, talent, rank —*could* you think it possible to love one who had but a scanty share of this treasure for his possession?"

"I could think it *possible*," said Frances, thinking of Tom and Mabel.

"Probable," said Power, growing pale, while he waited for her answer.

"Well, yes—probable," she replied, thinking, with some hesitation in her manner, of Mabel's dependence and Tom's want of fortune.

"You are doubtful, Miss Ray," said Power sadly, while he looked down into her eyes, as though he would read her very soul.

The thought suddenly flashed across her mind—could he doubt her? Her eyes filled with tears.

"Oh, Miss Ray," said Power passionately, "this wealth erects a cruel barrier between hearts that, but for it, might beat as one. Would that, with one blow from this willing hand, I might crush it. Would that I could trample it as an encumberer of the earth." He ground an old branch of a tree under his foot while he spoke. "It severs hearts and hands." He moved away a little, as though he *felt* the barrier between them growing more formidable. "It——"

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"What harm has it done to"—Frances was about to say *us*—but (with a blush) substituted the word "*you*, Mr. Power?"

"Harm?" repeated he, still keeping the imaginary barrier between them, and standing a few paces off, "harm? it deprives me of the dearest and brightest hope of my life!"

Frances turned pale. "*What* could he mean?" thought she. She glanced at him like a deer at bay, not knowing where to turn.

Power saw her distress. He would have given worlds to have annihilated the distance between them, but *conscience*, a more formidable barrier than even wealth, held him back.

"Miss Ray," he said, advancing a little, "you may trust my sincerity. Would that the woman I love as my life, were portionless, shelterless—that with my strong arm I might work for her happiness, that in my heart she might find a home; but as it *is*—oh! forgive me, forgive me!"

"*What* have I to forgive?" said Frances, the tears now flowing unrestrained.

"More than you think, only forgive."

"I have nothing to forgive," said Frances, bewildered.

"Would that you had not," replied he, bitterly. "But no, I *dare* not say more at present; say only you'll forgive me when you know *all*."

"Well, I forgive all your intended unkindness to me," said Frances, with a poor attempt at a smile;

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"but you must allow me at the same time to thank you for all your past kindness, as you are about to leave us."

While Miss Ray spoke, she, by the force of her will, *stemmed* the tears that were ready to start every moment. She then put out her hand to take leave.

Power took it reverently between both of his, held it lingeringly, as though he would fain have kissed it, but did not dare, then released it, saying:—

"We shall meet again, Miss Ray, at, I trust, no distant time."

They parted. Frances sought a favourite little arbour, where she sat till dusk. Power went towards the house. He was seen no more that night, and the next morning Tom and he were off before daybreak.

CHAPTER XI.

EARLY next morning as Susan was descending from the "parlour next the sky," vulgarly termed the garret—her sleeping apartment—as she was passing the landing-place which led to Tom's late room, she heard such a clashing of cold steel, and so alarming a battle among the generally passive implements of the hearth, that thinking that at all events, if on this particular morning "the poker and tongs to the shovel belongs," they must have quarrelled among themselves, she entered the apartment, and saw Matty vigorously black-leading the grate, and busily

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burnishing up every available bit of steel that caught her quick eye.

Although Matty was originally engaged to attend on the young ladies, that post being almost a sinecure, she did not disdain to make herself "generally useful." Though her generous mistresses were far from taking advantage of her willing service, yet having been taught by her granny "that Satan finds some mischief still for idle hands to do," she seldom allowed hers too much repose, nor for the matter of that *any* of her faculties. Even while her hands were employed, two or more of her senses were generally on the look out, like signals to entice any "waif" that the tide of time or circumstances might float towards the haven of her curiosity.

"You're early at work," said Susan. "Good gracious, I thought the sweeps was about, or that the tongs was nippin' the poker and shovel, and givin' each other black eyes, you made such a tremenjous clatter."

"I'm not going to let the grate get rusty," said Matty. "We may have more visitors shortly."

"Then the gentlemen are gone," said Susan.

"I should think they *are* indeed!" replied Matty. "I watched them from the window when they were about to go, and—well, the eldest Mr. Power was sad and quiet like, but as for young Mr. Tom, he tore away as if Satan and a *pelice*man was at his heels."

Matty's grandmother had instilled a wholesome dread of these two characters into the mind of her

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young charge—the one to put a check upon her spiritual, the other her temporal irregularities.

"Why was that?" said Susan, opening her eyes wide.

"How am I to know, Susan? And if I did—'least said is soonest mended.' *Didn't* they look as if something was 'up' this morning. I had a nice little breakfast for them, but they wouldn't touch it, but just drank off a cup of coffee as if it was poison; and as to Mr. Tom, he just looked as if he didn't care if he dropped down dead after it."

"Gracious me! perhaps they've had bad news," said Susan.

"The mail 's not in yet," said Matty decisively.

"Then, perhaps they're dyin' for love of our young ladies," Susan suggested. "*Ain't* they beautiful?"

"It 's to be hoped, then, that our young ladies is not dying for them," Matty answered, with a look that conveyed more than the words.

"They're fine, noble young gentlemen, Matty."

"I don't say but what they're noble, and generous too," said Matty. "When I went into the breakfast-room with the tray, and was about to lay the table, Mr. Power said, 'Don't trouble, Matty, we shall not wait; we'll just drink the coffee which you have been so thoughtful to make for us.' Then I made bold to say, for they're not *stand-off-ish* nor conceited, like some other gentlemen, 'Sir, the rolls is fresh, and the eggs new laid; I gathered them myself this morning, and you have a long ride.' 'You are a good

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girl, Matty,' said Mr. Power, 'and you must buy yourself a new dress to wear for my sake'; so I hears a jingle on the tray, and—if there wasn't a bright sov'ran, shining there among the cups."

"My oh!" said Susan.

"Before I had time to thank them, or refuse it, they were off; and now what do you think I mean to buy?—I don't want a dress," said Matty.

"A pork-pie, or a pallid-doe," said Susan.

"Pork-pies is going out, and I think pallet-toes will go after them. No, guess again."

"Bad-moral boots, perhaps," said Susan.

"BALL-*moral*, Susie! No, can't you guess. Not dress."

Susan, whose ideas seldom soared much beyond pork pies, used externally and internally, bad-moral boots, and pallid does, gave it up.

"I mean," said Matty with an air of satisfaction, "to buy a book called '*Enquire Within Upon Everything*.' I hear it has millions (Matty was fond of round numbers) of questions, and, of course, as many answers, and when I get it I need not be always asking that old cockatoo to be telling me everything. I wonder," continued Matty thoughtfully, "if it has anything about the Fenians in it—it must, *of course*, because the book says *everything*."

"Why do you want to know so many things, Matty?"

"Well, I don't know, when I'm polishing or cleaning, or running a long seam, my mind must

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be thinking of something. Granny used to tell me to say texts into myself, or swallow some of my 'crumbs of comfort,' or 'milk for babes;' she used to say I was only a babe, though I was past my teens, and that it was time enough for 'strong meat.' Well, I think the time has come for *strong meat* now, Susie."

"Is Fenians strong meat, Matty?"

"What a child you are, Susan; *strong meat* means things in religion you can't understand. Mumby's sermons is strong meat. I know they must be, for Granny and an old crony of hers, when they used to be talking over the minister's sermon on the Sundays that he'd thump the cushions awful, used to say them sermons *was* strong meat; and *didn't he* use big words mostly ending in *'nation*, and when I'd ask Granny what they meant, she'd say 'feed on your crumbs, child, you're but a babe.' So by that I know, Susie, the Gospels and small texts are milk and crumbs, and them sermons and books telling all about the bad place, and how some people (not people *we'd* call wicked either), will burn, and burn, and burn — and sinnerses souls will simmer in hot ashes *that's* strong meat, Susan!"

"Why, your Granny and her crony must have been like the *cannabials* you were reading to us about, Matty, that burnt and eat each other. For my part I'd like the crumbs and milk, though they'd be poor food for a working girl."

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"Well, you *are* a babe, and no mistake, Susie; why you're hardly weaned yet. I mustn't talk to you any more on that subjek, it makes one speak disrespectively of religion. Come along, breakfast must be ready!"

As Matty descended, she revolved in her mind how she might once more bring in the "subjek" uppermost in her thoughts; so hitting upon a happy idea of substituting another word to get over the Fenian difficulty, she had her question ready as she entered the kitchen.

Mumby was seated on his perch, eyeing the cook as she prepared the morning meal. After a few general remarks, Matty said—

"I believe they don't send out *convicks* here now, Mr. Mumby?"

"No, Miss," said Mumby, "we've enough bad people out here already, without getting the scum of Great Britain and—" Mumby turned round on his perch and looked towards the fire-place—"Ireland."

"I wonder now could they land here *unknownst* to the *pelice*," said Matty.

"Well, it's not likely," replied Mumby, "seeing that they're hammered in the hulks at home, or impaled on Spike Island!"

"Gracious me!" said Matty, is that how they're *punched* in England?"

"Anything is better than to have them swarming here like ants," said the cook—those insects giving her special annoyance.

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"Oh yes! now I remember hearing Miss Mabel read something about all the people *pe-dishionin* the Queen not to let the convicks come out here," said Matty, "and the ladies of Ballarat theirselves had a pe-dishion of their own, and what they said in a letter to the newspar on the subjik was this, they said:—'If convicks come out here, they'll marry of course, and their own sort, at least if they don't they ought to; well and good, them convicks would have children, little convicks. Then again, the little convicks (in time) would have children, great-little convicts; after that great-grand-little convicks, and so they'd swarm and swarm to *millions* in some years, and at last become more plenty than honest folk,' and then," said Matty, drawing her own conclusions, "we'd have convick magistrates, making laws to suit theirselves; convick ministers, telling us more about the bad place than the good;" here Matty glanced at Mumby; "convick pe-licemen, catching honest folk; a convick hangman—no, we've that already; a honest hangman, hanging honest folk, and perhaps a convick Governor!"

"I think we're badly enough governed without having convict magistrates and governors," groaned Mumby. "It's my opinion that if we escape the visitation of the convicts, some other will come upon us for our short-comings, to sweep us with the besom of destruction, as Judah was by the Babylonians."

"Well, I'm glad we're not swep' by the convicks, any how," said the cook.

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"What have we done to be swept at all for?" said Matty, "how-and-ever I'd rather be swept by Judy's babbies than by the big ugly convicks."

"You only show your ignorance by the way you speak, Miss Matilda," said Mumby, with importance; "the Babylonians was a nation sent to sweep—to punish the Jews for their sins."

A bright idea shot into Matty's brain. "Something like the Fenians now, Mr. Mumby, if they was let loose on us?"

"Well not exactly, Miss Quick, seeing that the Fenians themselves are already under condemnation."

The last three syllables smelling of "strong meat" to Matty, made her pause.

Susan being interested in the magnificent idea of a letter to the Queen, took up the thread of the conversation where it stopped at the knotty point about the "convicks." "And so the ladies really wrote to the Queen?" she resumed.

"Of course," said Matty, with a consequential air; "they didn't write with a common pen and ink, except to make it first out of their head like. The pe-dishion of the Ballarat ladies was wrote on white satting paper in letters of real gold, posted by the Governor himself, and as to a Queen's head, I don't suppose it wanted that, seeing it was for the Queen herself."

"And did the Queen answer it?" said Susan.

"Well," said Matty, "Queens don't egzackly answer letters with their own hands. Kings and

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Queens' letters goes through hundreds of hands before they reach the Post-office. The Queen first talks the matter over to her maids of honor," continued Matty.

"As if the Queen would kinsult weemen!" said Mumby.

"I suppose the Queen is a woman," said Matty, "and why shouldn't she kinsult women?"

"The Queen is governed by her Ministers," said Mumby.

"As if anybody governed the Queen!" said Matty; "besides, I *ought* to know all about it, Mr. Mumby, seeing that grandmother knew a person that spoke to a person in her Majesty's household. Another thing, I read about a-fish-all letters in the newspapers. Well, any how, the Queen talks the matter over with her *maids* of honour," said Matty, determined to uphold the dignity of her sex and order, "and then the maids tells her Majesty's mind to——"

"Pretty Poll!" squeaked Mumby.

"To," said Matty, not heeding the interruption, "the gentlemen of the bed-chamber."

"My oh!" said Susan.

"And they," continued Matty, "tells it to——"

"Pretty Poll!" again squeaked Mumby.

"To——" said Matty, with a toss of her head—

"The Gold Stick."

"How funny!" said Susan with open eyes and mouth.

"It means of course," said Matty, "the gentleman who holds the gold stick in-waiting. As if Mr.

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Mumby, now, always held a broom, he would be called a besom in-waiting; or Darby, with his whip, would be called a whip in-waiting; or as if I——" Matty stopped to think of something sufficiently imposing to designate her vocation, "as if I was called——"

"Pretty Poll!" vociferated Mumby, losing all patience.

The red streak "lightened" Matty's cheek, but she kept the thunder under a frowning brow for the present; suddenly she calmed down, and taking a monster lump of sugar from the basin, rolled it over towards Mumby, saying, "*Be* quiet, pretty Cockey, and *do* let us hear the sound of our own voices once in a way."

Darby had sauntered in during this interesting duet between Matty and Mumby; and to judge by the quiet humour in his keen eye, and an occasional wink to the cook, seemed to enjoy the "high life below stairs" immensely.

Mumby took up the lump quietly, and dropping it into Matty's cup, said—

"*Parrots* is partial to sweets too! It 's my opinion that the lining of your throat must be wore away, from the torrent of words that has rushed through it this morning. A sugar plaister 'ill do it no harm, Miss."

"And who got the letter next?" said Susan, whose interest in this queenly correspondence was unabated.

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"Well, I suppose after going through hundreds of hands, the clerk that writes a-fish-all letters posted it for Melbourne."

"Was the Queen's letter wrote on sating paper, and with gold letters too?" said Susan.

"A-fish-all letters doesn't be wrote on satting paper and in gold writing, child," said Matty with a patronizing air, "but on a ass's skin with a goose's quill."

"And did the letter come out here at last, Matty?"

"How many questions you ask, Susan. Of course; it came across the ocean, up Hobson's Bay, and so on to the Governor's table."

"I wonder was it good to *fry*," said Darby, winking at the cook.

The poor cook's brain was so addled between Matty's letter and Darby's question, she did not well know which end of the subject to take hold of; however, catching it by the *tail-end*, she ventured to remark, "I'd be afeard, if it came all that way, it would be *rather stale*, Mr. Maloney."

"Faix! I agree with ye, mam," said Darby, with a roar of laughter; "them same fish-all letters, I've heard tell, often gives the Governor himself a sick stomach, and some of the grate *O's* and Mac's into the bargain. Bedad!"

But as the conversation had drifted wide of Matty's opening question, Miss Quick strove to bring it back to the point from which she started.

"And so you think the convicks couldn't escape, Mr. Mumby. But now suppose, not a reg'lar convick,

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but a Fenian, we'll say a gentleman that had friends to help him to escape; he could come out here by *another name*, and nobody be a bit the wiser. Couldn't that be the case, Mr. Mumby?"

"Have any of your partiklar friends come out here, Miss Quick, that makes you so interested in convicts?" said Mumby, whose temper the sugar had not sweetened.

"As you expected a *visitation* from them yourself, Mr. Mumby, I thought you might know all about them," Matty replied, her throat still "holding its own."

"What makes you think a Fenian gentleman would come out here?" said Darby, eying Matty keenly.

"His own country might be too hot to hold him, Mr. Maloney," said Matty, eying Darby as keenly in return.

"Take care, or you may have the po-liss on yer track, Miss, if ye talk so much about convicts and gentlemen," said Darby quietly.

"You might be *mistaken* about *gentlemen*," said Matty, as quietly in return, thinking she gave Darby a home thrust.

"I'd never be mistaken in a *goose*," said Darby, "and its my belief that what between your cackling and that ould raven's croakin' yonder, ye'd make sich a purty couple, that it would be a pity ever to put ye asunder."

"If you mean to be insulting, Mr. Malony, you'd better take yourself and your pipe out of the kitchen."

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"Meself and me pipe 'll stay just as long as we please, Miss Quick."

"I think, Miss Matilda," said Mumby, "convicts is a sore point with Mr. Malony, so you had better drop it."

"Who says it's a sore point with me?" said Darby, in a voice like thunder.

"*I* say it if I like," said Mumby, with quivering eyelids and crest erect.

"I tell ye what," said Darby, "ye'd betther *unsay* it then, or that beak of yours will have a sorer point than ever Spike Island had for the convicts. I threatened it once before," Darby continued, eyeing it sideways, "so you'd betther not try me patience too much, seeing its a quollity they don't give the Irish much credit for."

Mumby stood up and faced Darby. He did not want *pluck*, but how to *get at* Darby, that was the question.

Darby put his "fist" within an inch of Mumby's nose; one blow from such an instrument would soon send it *nowhere!* and Mumby understood the hieroglyph.

"I tould ye to keep a civil tongue in yer head," said Darby, "I've threatened IT twice, 'the third time's the charrum, and I've a good memory.'" Saying this Darby sat down.

Mumby saying he would not eat at the same table with a reprobate (*when he was at a safe distance*), left the kitchen.

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Matty rose soon after, and as she swept past Darby whispered, "Never fear, Mr. Malony, '*I'll be tight as a trivet!*'"

CHAPTER XII.

As Matty ascended the stairs with her mop and broom, she determined to give the spiders no peace that morning, especially on the landing that led to the rooms occupied by the young ladies; she cleverly unhooked the long trailing threads, dexterously wafted their delicate nets on the head of her mop, and sent the spiders running frantically into invisible corners—to spin again; and when she had waved the long implement in circles mysteriously towards the ceiling like the wand of an enchantress, she bent softly down on one knee, and put the very ear that Mumby had so lately chastised to the keyhole of the door which belonged to the "boudoir," the sacred sanctuary of the young ladies, where none approached without warning.

We are sorry to be obliged to record the failure of Mumby's theory, for he firmly believed that *that* ear at all events would not offend again, and being a "caution" to its fellow, the latter would have a proper horror of committing a crime that was lately followed by such retributive justice. However, greater philosophers have failed in their theories than Mumby, and to do Matty justice she did not

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give the theorist much hope of success, when he endeavoured to practise upon the "organ" so opportunely offered for the display of his execution.

Far be it from us to desire to penetrate into the mysteries of that sanctuary, we can only attempt to describe what Matty's fine ear discerned; there was a conversation carried on in so low a tone that the listener could overhear nothing important for a time; then a sentence about its "being so hard to do one's duty," some weeping, "what had I to forgive?" Mystery—"how would it all end?"

Yes, it was all as clear as day to Matty, there was an unexplained mystery, the gentleman (*which* Matty was not yet sure) had asked forgiveness for what was as yet a mystery; "hum," said Miss Matilda to herself, "it 'ill not be long hid, sure enough the *pelice* 'ill soon lay it all bare enough, 'hard to do one's duty,' that's loving him when he's under a cloud, when she oughtn't to."

For some time all was still, then after a little, one appeared to soothe the other; at length a voice burst out in a heart-rending tone. "Oh Frances! I feel I have done right, and what Papa, if he were living, would have me do; but I am so miserable, so very miserable!" Then there was a long bitter wail, like the slow melancholy sweep of the trees, on a night that threatened a storm; after that a burst of tears and sobbing, as if the heart must break.

Matty's eyes filled with tears. The girl was not bad hearted, and when she understood that it was

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Mabel who was the victim, one she had always looked upon as a sort of pet child, she could contain herself no longer, but bursting open the door and rushing into the room said—

"Oh, Miss Ray dear—Miss Mabel darling, I know all! Excuse my rudeness in coming in without knocking, but, I was dusting the walls, and I heard your sobs—it 's hard to bear, but better know all and have it over!"

"What does the girl mean?" said Frances, looking up nervously, while Mabel threw her handkerchief over her face, and turned towards the window.

"Them gentlemen," said Matty.

Frances felt herself getting sick with apprehension; she thought she was going to hear of Power's coming marriage to some one, perhaps to whom he was irrevocably bound before he saw her. While Mabel pulled down her handkerchief, turned round, and looked inquiringly at Matty.

"Well, what about those gentlemen?" she said, proudly, at the same time glancing anxiously towards Frances.

"*One* is, I know," said Matty, with a look of horror, "a——" she hesitated.

"A *what?*" said Mabel, stamping her foot with impatience.

"A FENIAN!" said Matty, holding her broom upright, something in the attitude of a policeman shouldering his gun.

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Frances sank back in her seat with a sigh of relief; *any* treason at that moment was less hard to bear than *heart* treason.

"A WHAT?" said Mabel, starting forward.

"A *Fenian*, Miss," said Matty. "It's my belief the pe-lice is after him, for he tore away this morning like mad."

"And the other?" said Mabel, her features working with some emotion she found it difficult to repress.

"It 's my belief he 's as bad as the others," said Matty sagaciously.

Mabel went over to her cousin, who sat with a perplexed, but not very sorrowful countenance in her chair.

"Do you hear, Frances, our friends are *Fenians*—FENIANS!" she exclaimed, while her voice rang like a merry bell through the chamber, and when her laughter was ready to die away from sheer exhaustion, one look at Matty shouldering her broom was sufficient to set it ringing again. "How *can* you take it so quietly, Frances?" she continued, giving her friend a little shake; it is enough to make Mumby laugh, and I believe he was never known to smile yet."

"Yes, he thinks the world too wicked to be laughed at," said Frances, "and who knows what he might make out of Matty's declaration."

"And how did your fertile brain hatch that delicious idea?" said Mabel to Matty.

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"I did not hatch it, Miss," replied Matty; "but, to begin, one day I was looking for eggs——"

"There now!" said Mabel, her laugh getting irrepressible, "I told you you hatched the plot."

Matty looked serious. She was vexed her communication was put in so ridiculous a light.

Mabel tried to look grave.

"I was looking for eggs," Matty continued.

"Laid by Hibernian geese," said Mabel with mock gravity, "hatched by a foreign hen, and lo! two full-fledged Fenians!"

Matty stood like a sentinel guarding his post.

"Well, Matty," said Frances, "what have you to say? Don't interrupt her, Mabel."

Matty turned towards Frances.

"I was stooping down, looking for eggs——"

"That's how she got the maggot in her brain," said Mabel, who found it utterly impossible to be serious with Matty, when she had disturbed her nest, and gave liberty to her full-fledged progeny.

Frances took Mabel playfully by the shoulder, and pushed her into an inner room; she then sat down, called Matty towards her, and asked her quietly to tell her all she knew.

Miss Quick then related all she heard, from first to last, with her own "alterations, additions and improvements," drew her own little inferences, and then left the matter to Frances to digest, and for Mabel "to chew the cud."

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When Frances heard all, she only said, a little haughtily, "You must be cautious how you speak of any gentlemen, more especially my father's guests. You have put together scraps of conversation which, taken separately, have no meaning. If this came to your master's ears he would not think it safe to allow you to remain here, but as I know it is only the result of your silly curiosity, I shall say nothing about it, as you mean no harm to us. Go, now, and beware how you utter another syllable on the subject."

Matty retired discomfited but not beaten, she *felt* there was more than they suspected, or pretended *not* to suspect; so shouldering her broom once more and lowering her mop, she departed, muttering while she closed the door, as a retreating foe might fire a last shot at the enemy, about something "not being a block till it 's hit!"

Were Matty's communication of no other importance, it had the merit at all events of turning the minds of the two girls, for the present at least, in a different direction; and of dispersing that whirlwind of anxiety, that goes round and round the one spot, gathering only confusion in its course, and ending where it began.

The intelligence conveyed so startling and original a ridiculousness to the mind of Mabel, that a single glance at Matty for some time after her disclosure, was like a sudden jet of flame, under a vessel of water that had just reached boiling point, causing her mirth to bubble over instantaneously.

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Frances did not view the matter in quite so incredulous a light as her cousin; that there was some unexplained mystery regarding Power she already knew; some transgression he already acknowledged, and it might be that some rash avowal of certain political opinions antagonistic to the peace of his country might have induced his father to send him out of the way—Darby evidently knowing something of the family might have got intelligence through channels known to himself alone, and so—hastily turning from the first startling image her fancy conjured up regarding Power, she embraced the hobgoblin of Matty's imagination rather than the spectre of her own.

Frances, however, kept her own counsel in this matter, having a nervous dread of Mabel's ridicule. No doubt she would have viewed the subject in a manner equally just as her cousin had done, but Power's conduct had already thrown the film of doubt over the natural clearness of her mind's eye, and caused her to view objects rather as she would have them, than as they appeared to a disinterested spectator.

For some days she passed her time in a sort of restless vacuity, so different from the happy cheerfulness with which she usually performed her self-imposed duties. As time wore on and brought no explanation her little routine of industry fell into its old groove, habit regained its salutary power, she waited with upturned face for the passing away of

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the cloud that brought the storm. It passed—but the sunshine did not return.

As to Mabel a sort of passionate regret took possession of her soul, She had promised her father when quite a child, that she would never marry a poor man, and her father dying shortly after, made the obligation to keep her word seem a sort of religious duty. She now found she had imposed too severe a task upon her heart, a heart she felt when it was too late, would have responded with affectionate earnestness to Tom's manly and sincere attachment. So she turned her knight and ladye to the wall, her back upon poor Phil, plunged into sensational literature, as a sort of mental alcohol to drown her vexation, and strove to bury out of sight, like Lady Audley, her "secret" in the "drywell" of her poor heart.

CHAPTER XIII.

One morning as Mr. Ray entered the breakfast-room, his face assumed an air of satisfaction and importance as he took his accustomed seat.

While waiting for Frances to pour out his coffee, he raised his plate and put a folded paper underneath it, glanced at Mabel over his spectacles, received his cup, and commenced his breakfast, giving all the time furtive glimpses at Mabel during his repast.

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His niece was used to her uncle's manner; whenever he had a letter to give, or anything important to communicate, he generally played with his subject as a cat does with a mouse, letting it go for a little, and then, should the person interested appear the least anxious or excited, catching it again, as it were, between his teeth, and so on, till it was finally disposed of. The best way to act under those circumstances, was to endeavour not to appear the least interested, as should the individual concerned seem so, the subject might be postponed indefinitely. Mabel, knowing this peculiarity, kept a profound unquestioning silence, whenever she caught her uncle's eye. At length the old gentleman raised his plate, drew the paper from under it, put his hand upon it, and stared at Mabel, who looked as motionless and frightened as a mouse fascinated by a cat, while her heart beat almost audibly.

Mr. Ray continued to fix his gaze a few moments longer on Mabel, who did not even wink.

"Well, you remember that two or three hundred pounds your Aunt Letty bequeathed to you" (Mabel thought she had spent it all long ago, but did not dare say so). "Very well, silence gives consent; so far, so good; that sum, I, your uncle, trustee and guardian, invested, years ago, in the 'Heart and Dart Gold Mining Company,' and it 's now worth *Ten Thousand Pounds.*"

Mabel sprang from her seat, looked round the room; no doubt had there been any opening or hole

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in the wall, she would have darted through there and then; as it was she looked furtively at the chimney.

"Well, have you nothing to say?" said her uncle, after a pause. "But one can never know how girls will take things; instead of being glad, there you stand, as timid and frightened as a mouse."

"I cannot realize it. I cannot understand it. Surely if I had a trifle I spent it long ago in pocket money," said Mabel helplessly.

"What an extravagant little minx you are. As if I, your uncle, trustee, and guardian, would permit you to squander your little fortune that way. No, no! catch me allowing girls under age the handling of their own money. Read that," continued he, handing her a paper.

Mabel cast her dazed eyes over it; it might have been Hebrew for her, as she did not even try to decipher its contents. "I cannot comprehend how it has all come about," said she. "But I can understand your goodness, uncle;" and she went over and put her arms round the old man's neck, who caressed her as if she were still the pet plaything of old.

Mr. Ray then turned towards his daughter.

"It 's all for the best, Fan," he said, "that I chose the 'Heart and Dart Co.' for Mabel. I put your little legacy in the 'Wattle and Dab,' and it is a failure as yet."

Francis did not give the matter a thought, but congratulated Mabel on being an heiress—said the Australian fairies or gnomes had been busy working

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under-ground, forging ingots of gold, and casting nuggets, for their queen; reminded her she was already Queen Mab, and humbly asked the favour of a stroke of her wand on trying occasions.

Instead of Mr. Ray's intelligence producing any outward symptoms of joy or excitement on Mabel, the news seemed to endow her with a gravity and thoughtfulness unusual to her.

Accordingly when her aunt and Frances left the room, and Mabel was alone with her uncle, she said to him softly, putting her hand upon his shoulder, "I suppose, dear uncle, I must believe you when you tell me all that money is mine."

"It is all yours, my little queen."

"And can I do what I like with it?"

"Yes, when you are of age. Until then, I am your guardian you know, although you are a queen."

"I shall soon be of age," said Mabel.

"Do you want to escape from your old uncle's custody, Mab; has he been so *very* tyrannical?"

There was a very expressive answer to this, which satisfied the old gentleman.

"But," continued Mr. Ray, with more gravity, "we must take care that when the money leaves my custody it will pass into hands that will know how to value it, and our Pet, as well as we do ourselves."

"Have I ever been disobedient, uncle; and have I not cause to be more dutiful than ever?" she answered.

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"Yes! yes! you and Frances are both good girls, good girls; but," said the old man, with hesitation, "we cannot always put old heads on young shoulders."

"Well, uncle," said Mabel gaily, "we can sometimes put young heads on old shoulders," and she rested her bright head for a moment on her uncle's shoulder.

"You are a true fairy, Mab. You say such odd things. Go now to your aunt and Frances, and do not forget to put away that bit of paper safe in your desk.

When Mabel left the room she did not join her aunt and Frances, but went straight to her own apartment, opened her desk, and put away the important document, which was only a copy of a bank receipt for the amount deposited, then sat down and penned the following epistle:—

RAYMOUNT.

"I have been so unhappy since. Can you forgive all my unkindness and ingratitude to you? Only think, a small sum my uncle invested for me years ago in the 'Heart and Dart' Gold Mining Company is worth *ten thousand pounds.* If you think it enough—only *don't* believe me to be a mercenary monster! I did it all for the best. But, if you have changed your mind, let all sink into oblivion, and forgive and forget—

"MABEL."

"THOMAS POWER, ESQ., JUN., Melbourne, &c., &c."

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CHAPTER XIV.

WE must now leave Raymount for a little, and follow Mabel's letter till we find it on the breakfast-table at the hotel where the two Powers were staying.

Power had repeatedly urged Tom to write to Raymount and reveal all, but the latter still held back. The science of love teaching him, paradoxical as it may appear in his case, that if Mabel once knew *now* that he was the rich heir of Powersfort, all chance of winning her was over; that even though she rejected him, knowing him to be poor, she would not accept him *because* he was rich. Of course, he reasoned on the supposition that she was worth having, and he yet strongly suspected she was, in spite of her uneasiness regarding the "*six sous.*" That very morning Power had more than ever been strenuously urging Tom to write, but Tom persisted in hoping that something would "turn up" to prevent the disagreeable necessity of confessing his sins, and losing his love.

It is a fact that for some people nothing ever "turns up." All they win is by dint of laborious exertion, or painful struggles. While for others, notwithstanding the wise shakings of heads, the dictates of ordinary prudence, or the maxims of common sense, something *does* turn up, and perhaps no one is more astonished at the manner in which the "*turn up*" crops up than he who so recklessly scattered the seed!

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At all events the "turn up" theory was discussed by the young men as they descended the stairs to the breakfast-room, when the letter, in a lady's hand, directed to Thos. Power, *jun.*, caught their eye as it lay upon the table.

Tom took it up, thinking it was an invitation. Like most who are doubtful of their correspondent he glanced first at the signature, and then *took in* with his mental vision, rather than with his bodily eyes, the contents of the letter, which, when comprehended, he cried "Victory! victory! the gate is passed, and heaven is won!"

"What 's in the wind now?" said Power.

"An angel!" said Tom. "Read that." Tom passed the letter to his friend, waving it like a flag.

A gleam of happiness passed over Power's face, such as it had not worn for months, when he read the letter. "All will end happily for *you*, Tom, come what will," said Power, "and that is one great point gained; in fact we have accomplished our project, though not in the way we planned."

"And for you too," said Tom, earnestly. "Don't you see my little stratagem will prove your innocence."

"No," said Power, "that is not so clear, but allowance must be made for your viewing everything just now through the rose-coloured glass of happiness."

"I shall not keep it to myself, then," replied Tom. "You shall look through it too, all in good time, you know, but now to breakfast with what appetite we may."

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"What do you mean to do?" said Power, as he took his seat.

"Well, in the first place, I must answer that darling's letter," said Tom, pouring out his coffee till it ran over his saucer on the cloth.

"Your cup is running over," said Power. "Happy man!"

"And in the next place?" said Tom.

"You will explain all, of course," said his friend, "and write to Mr. Ray."

"And write to Mr. Ray, *of course*," replied Tom, in an absent manner.

"Better lose no time," said Power, "or you may miss the post."

"And here I am sitting like a donkey!" said Tom, "when moments are precious." Saying this he got up, went straight to a table, and taking up pen and paper wrote as follows—

"MABEL, you are an angel! Forgive you! When you know all, you shall see it is *I* who need forgiveness—forget you! 'NEVER, NEVER.'

Your own TOM.

P.S.—I shall be at Raymount to-morrow.

"MISS MABEL RAY, &c., &c."

Tom then wrote a respectful letter to Mr. Ray, all the time scarcely knowing whether he was upon his head or his heels, asking formally for the hand of his

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niece, mentioning his expectations as sole heir to his father's property, talking of liberal settlements, and all the etceteras which a rich man and a generous lover is willing to grant, and winding up by saying he would be at Raymount next day when he hoped to have the happiness of gaining his consent, &c., &c., &c. Tom folded and directed his letters hastily, snatched up his hat, and flew to the Post-office himself to post the letters, lest there might be some mischance if any other hand than his own stamped and dropped them into that hole of Destiny. This done, he returned to talk to Power about his hopes and his coming journey, but found him busily engaged writing letters for the English mail. This reminded Tom of his duty to his parents, so he scrawled a letter to his mother, telling her she would have important news he hoped next mail. He then went to the Railway Station to find out the hour for starting on the following morning, and afterwards sauntered through the town till dinner-time, to kill time. Went to his hotel to dine and bore his friend, and finally retired to dream of "Paradise" and his "Peri!"

CHAPTER XV.

At about the same time that Tom was indulging his pleasing visions of future bliss, a small party were seated round the table at Raymount, anticipating the more homely prospect of tea and coffee, with their

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adjuncts in the shape of graceful (why should not they be graceful?) tea rolls and delicate pats of butter, all so fragrant and dainty that even a Peri—with appetite—might mistake the fare for nectar and ambrosia, it being the best of its kind, as indeed everything was at Raymount.

Poor Mabel had seen Mr. Ray, from her window, pocketing the contents of the mail-bag; so, if there had been an answer to her letter, she must bide her time to receive it.

She had no other fear for her letter than that caused by delay, Mr. Ray being a gentleman in every sense of the word—an individual fast dying out among us, according to Hallam. More 's the pity.

Mr. Ray's face wore its look of importance this evening. He glanced at Mabel over his spectacles; watched her with his cat-at-a-mouse-hole look of earnestness, which expanded into one of inquiry, as he drew a letter from his pocket (an open one), and placed it under his plate.

It was evident the old gentleman's penetration was at fault, for whatever he hoped or expected to see in his niece's face was not there. He continued to gaze at her mouth (which opened slowly every now and then to admit a diminutive portion of the above-mentioned rolls), ready to pounce upon the first word she uttered, but it came not; so, for the present, the old gentleman kept his hand, with its fingers widely spread, firmly pressed upon his plate, but stirred not; his "tale" was in a trap.

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However, with the wariness of a wounded creature, he did not struggle violently to free himself, but bit his nails cautiously, as though he could gnaw himself out of his difficulty. "Can anyone tell me," he said at last, "that if I hold an object quite close to my eyes I cannot see it, but if I put it at a distance, so," he continued, holding a paper at arm's length, "I can see it quite plainly. Why is this?"

Mr. Ray looked penetratingly at Mabel, as he uttered this harangue.

No one was sufficiently well versed in optics to tell him the reason.

"If my friend, Mr. Power (senior), were here," said he, "he would explain it; that young man seems to know *everything*." (Another piercing glance at his niece.) "When one of my horses was stolen," continued Mr. Ray, "I knew it ten minutes after it was gone; but here has something been stolen from under my very nose, and I have not found it out. No; not for weeks after it was gone."

"What has been stolen from under your nose?" said his sister.

"The heart of a fairy," said he, winking at Mabel.

Mabel was distressed beyond measure. "Could Tom," thought she, "have been so stupid as to write to her uncle without first answering her letter? or had Mr. Ray seen the handwriting on the address of her letter (if there had been one), and was quizzing her?" These thoughts flashed through her brain, but she was fated to be still more in the dark.

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"Who has stolen it?" again questioned his sister.

"That 's the mystery of it," said he. "When I think of my friend, Power, talking dry politics to me, and listening to the dull details of my colonial experience, with the face of a judge passing sentence of death. When I think that all this time he was stealing away the affections of our queen, I say what is the use of Brazilian pebbles?" Saying this, Mr. Ray took off his spectacles, polished them, put them on again, and stared at Mabel.

Mabel and Frances looked at one another surprised. They could not comprehend the old gentleman's meaning.

"You have not told us exactly *which* of the gentlemen is the thief," said straightforward Aunt Esther; "they are both 'Mr. Power,' you know."

"Why, you are very dull, Essy," said her brother. "Well," continued he, emphatically marking every word, "Thos. Power, Esq. (senior), heir of Powersfort, co. Waterford, Ireland, has stolen the heart of Miss Mabel Ray, spinster, niece of Francis Ray, Esq., Raymount, Victoria, Australia."

Mabel was thunderstruck! She looked at Frances, whose face of ashy paleness terrified her.

"There is, there must be some mistake," said Mabel.

Her uncle saw her genuine look of surprise, and was puzzled. Had he looked a little further, according to his own theory, he should have seen something but too painfully distinct. Happily for Frances, he did not.

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Mr. Ray then drew forth the letter (Tom's) and read it from beginning to end. There was no mistaking *that*, yes, the hand of his *niece* was formally asked, the writer's expectations as heir of Powersfort *announced*, settlements, &c., all left to Mr. Ray to manage, everything that love could dictate or generosity grant was in the letter, and it wound up by saying he would be at Raymount the following day.

"So you are surprised at the letter?" said Mr. Ray, addressing his niece, "Well, I trust this may be a pleasant surprise, even for a fairy!"

"It is *not* a pleasant surprise," said Mabel, "and I *cannot* understand it."

"Oh, you'll understand it all in good time," said her uncle, thinking her only a little coy.

"I shall *never* understand it," replied Mabel, sorrowfully, as she furtively glanced at Frances, who sat pallid and dismayed, unable to utter a syllable.

"Why," said her uncle, "as I said before, one can never tell how girls will take things. Here is a young man, such as one might not meet with again in a lifetime, talented, well-principled, and rich, and a girl with a fair natural capacity, and—though I say it that shouldn't—beautiful, can't comprehend why he likes her! I've known you to understand harder things than that, Mab! Come now, what shall I reply to him?"

Mabel would have parried the question, but there was no getting over the *fact* in the letter.

"What shall I say to him?" said her uncle, pleasantly. "What shall I tell him, Mab?"

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"Tell him," said Mabel, starting up, and speaking with vehemence, "if it be true that he wrote that letter—which I doubt—tell him that I hate and despise him! What else can he expect or deserve?"

"The gratitude of a lady," said Mr. Ray, seriously, "and not the rudeness of a spoiled child, to give it no worse a name."

"Come away, Frances!" said Mabel, "this room is so hot, my head aches. Let us take a turn on the lawn." Saying this, Mabel beckoning to Frances left the room.

Frances did not immediately follow her, but when Mabel was gone a few minutes, she went over to her father and said gently—"Don't write to Mr. Power yet, Papa; Mabel is impulsive, and may change her mind."

"Do you think I am mad, my love, to tell the ravings of a silly girl to a man of sense? It's my belief," he said in an undertone, "*she likes the other one;* but the foolish girl" (said the old head) "ought not to let that impediment stand in the way of rank and fortune."

"Two things I know Mabel is not indifferent to," said Frances; "but at all events you will not write just now, papa?"

"We shall do nothing in a hurry, darling," said her father. "Go to her and try and talk her into reason, if you can."

"Frances," said her Aunt, as she was leaving the room, in quest of Mabel, "I think those long walks

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you take fatigue you too much. You look so pale and tired this evening."

"On the contrary, Aunt, they do me good; but I *do* feel tired to-night—*with life*," she said to herself, as she closed the door and went out into the dark to seek Mabel.

Frances found Mabel in the very arbour she had taken refuge in upon the evening of Power's departure; there was everything to aggravate her distress on this miserable night.

The two girls sat long together, viewing the evening's events from all possible points of view. When they thought they saw their way out of the labyrinth, through a little opening of light, the *fact* of the letter, like a huge boulder, stopped their further progress. When they hoped they had disentangled the confused skein of reasoning and probability, the knotty *fact*, sufficient to satisfy a Grad-grind or a Bounderby left no means of unwinding the thread of circumstance but by rudely cutting it asunder, and rending *one* heart at least by the act.

Mabel was not convinced. Frances turned wearily to the house. Both girls sought their beds, but not to sleep. So we shall leave them at present to the tender mercies of *Time* the great unraveller, only observing that at the very hour the two girls laid their heads upon their pillows, Tom was starting frantically from his bed exclaiming—

"Good heavens, Tom! I have never explained that *I was the real Simon Pure!*"

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CHAPTER XVI.

THE dull grey light of dawn had barely penetrated the sleeping room of the two girls, when Frances arose, and going over towards the bed on which Mabel lay, flung as it were in an attitude of grief, and apparently arrested by overpowering slumber; she gazed long and earnestly at the sleeping girl, whose cheeks were still flushed with the excitement and anger caused by the news of the previous evening, and whose eyelashes were yet glistening with the tears shed in pity and in sorrow for her friend's unhappiness.

Miss Ray's face wore a painful expression of forced quiet; there was no flush upon her cheek, or trace of tears in her eyes; but a wide circle round each orb, gave a sort of moonlight melancholy to her countenance that portended a tearful change.

She looked at Mabel's rich tresses as they lay upon her roseate cheek, and they reminded her of the lustrous clouds that hung round the ruby sky, upon some of those sunset evenings her cousin loved to gaze at with a sort of rapture, as heralding a bright "to-morrow."

"Yes," Frances muttered softly, "such natures have a kindred sympathy with the elements; that face betokens a bright future." She took one of the silken curls in her hand, and held it up towards the

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light, then gently laid it down again. "She is very beautiful," she said with a sigh, and glanced, while she spoke, at a mirror in which her own pale face was reflected; "and good," she continued, while she hastily dressed herself, not, however, paying much attention to her toilette, but, throwing on carelessly a white dressing gown, and pushing her hair back under a garden hat, while she wrapped a shawl round her, she stealthily walked across the room, softly closed the door after her, and descended into the little breakfast-room, which had the glass door, and was only fastened on the inside. She then opened the door, and stepped softly out to the gravel walk, passed into the garden, through the shrubbery, and so on, till she reached the gate; this she unlatched, and closed behind her. Frances was now on the road, along which she walked rapidly till she reached the bush, never stopping or appearing to hesitate as to her purpose, but continuing to go on, and on, and on, as if she would leave all behind her—her years of tranquil happiness; her weeks of transcendent felicity; her hours of dark despair—thus she proceeded till she reached the base of a lofty and rather isolated hill, wooded to its summit. She then began to ascend, without the least apparent fatigue, the almost perpendicular side of the eminence. She then went up, and up, and up, grasping the twigs recklessly in her ascent; and, if one broke, carelessly snatching at another, and never losing her balance, till she finally reached the top.

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As the mount was itself situated upon gradually rising ground, the view from the summit was magnificent; combining a sweep of country with its hills and dales, trees and rivers, on the one side, and bounded at the distant horizon by the sea; while the back ground rose higher still, with yet loftier summits rising still higher behind each hill, and the whole terminated by a bold outline of mountain ranges.

Frances never stopped till she reached the centre of the hill, on which a sort of rustic seat was placed so as to front the prospect which looked towards the sea. She then sat down upon the seat, showing symptoms of weariness for the first time, laid her head back against an old tree, from which probably the seat had been made, and which stood close behind it, and gazed beyond the trees, the lagoons, the woods, the rivers, far, far on till her eye rested on the silver outline of the sea, as it was just touched by the morning light; her eyes then remained fixed and her form motionless for some time. She then said, as if continuing her thoughts—

"Yes, she is very beautiful and good, *every* body loves her; *this*, then, is what I had to forgive! but—ah! why pursue the endless maze again?" she said, with a weary look. "How often have I come hither," she said, looking around her, "to pour out the griefs of my motherless childhood, and here I sat watching the sea that was to bring me—Mabel! How I yearned for a sister's love, and kept my prettiest toys for her; and now, she *takes*— No, she is too good for that,

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but she will yield to *his* entreaties—to *his love*. Ah! who can resist that?"

Frances then looked towards the sea again. "Oh how I love its restlessness, its boundlessness, its very *danger*, danger! What is danger?" she said, starting up from her seat. "Is it the lashing billows, the breakers, the rocks?" She laughed. "Would I were in a ship this moment," she said, letting her hat fall off, while the wind blew about her unfastened hair, and caused it to stream behind her, like the torn flag of a storm-tossed vessel. "What would *I* care," she said mockingly, "for thunders and lightnings, and foaming billows, and angry breakers? the rock on which my heart will break is *here*. Oh! Mabel, Mabel!"

She then sat down again, a quieter mood came over her, like a sudden lull in the storm her fancy had portrayed, and the tears at last trickled down her cheeks. "Yes," she said, "it would be sweet to sail away and away, over that blue ocean, and to be rocked gently up and down like a child in a cradle by a tender mother."

She closed her eyes as if the picture her heart longed for was slowly being realised: the fancy seemed to soothe her, for she lay back on the seat, as though rocked by invisible hands with a half smile upon her lips.

* * * * * *

The sun had nearly reached his meridian height, awakening bird, tree, flower and insect to a newer

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and a brighter life—the form on the rustic seat still remaining undisturbed,—when the figure of a man appeared just above the edge of the steep declivity, looking wildly round, till its eyes rested on the rustic seat and its motionless tenant.

The individual at once leaped to the summit and proceeded cautiously towards the seat, the breeze meanwhile fluttering the dress and lightly waving the hair.

"Thank God!" he said (seeing the dress move) in a tone which seemed as if a stone were lifted from his heart, "thank God she lives!"

He then turned back towards a group who were half way up the Mount, and taking out his handkerchief waved it joyously backwards and forwards. The signal was understood, and answered in a similarmanner. The little party continuing to ascend; but this proceeding not seeming to suit the views of the first-comer, he motioned them back with earnestness. The little group appeared to hesitate for some time, but finally sat down, apparently waiting further orders from their leader.

It will not be difficult to guess who formed the little party, but the individual who appeared first at the summit of the hill was Power; but when he approached the seat for the second time, and saw all so still, he stopped suddenly, his heart gave a throb, and then a feeling as if a bar of ice painfully penetrated his side caused him to put up his hand, and press it to his breast, especially when he

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perceived it was the wind that caused the motion that at first gave new life to his despair. However, this suspense could not last; he walked totteringly over towards the seat, his face as white as the dress that fluttered in the wind, and looked upon the pale face and listless form of the young girl who lay there so still, with the half smile yet upon her face, her hair lifted every now and then by the wind, and her arms hanging helplessly over the seat. Power took one of the hands in his; it was cold as ice. He then hastily drew off his travelling coat—which he had not thought of removing in the dismay and confusion prevailing at Raymount at the time of his and Tom's arrival,—and wrapping it round the inanimate form of the prostrate girl, he took her in his arms, holding her face up towards the sun, wildly and yet tenderly, as if he would demand from heaven the breath it had—he *could* not yet say—taken; he then sat down and chafed her stiff hands with his own, yet warm with exercise, and at last there was a long deep-drawn inhalation, as if indeed the Life-giving sun had sought the Death chamber of the heart, and sent its spiritual rays to electrify every vein and thrill every nerve.

Power held her so still, it seemed that if he stirred he feared the delicate balance between life and death might be perilled; but when he saw the colour touch as it were her lips and cheek with an invisible pencil, he said—

"Miss Ray—Frances—My love, speak to me, or my heart will break!"

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Frances slowly opened her eyes, and gazed round her, "I have been dreaming, oh! so sweetly," she said. "But," she pressed her hand to her brow, while a spasm of pain seemed to shoot across it, "why did I wake? Where am I?" she cried, starting up alarmed.

"You are *safe*, Miss Ray, thank God," said Power, as he rose and placed her carefully upon the seat. She looked up quickly, while a flush swept over her face, a little before so white and stony, like the rush of sunshine upon one of the neighbouring hills, that had been so grey and cold in the early dawn.

Their eyes met—there was no need of explanation—Frances saw all she cared to know in that one glance, and Power all he hoped for; but she did not yet know all.

Frances looked up at the sun. "How long have I been here?" she said. "My father——"

"Knows you are safe, Miss Ray. I telegraphed to them from the top of the hill, when I had discovered whither you had strayed to." He did not think it necessary to tell her *how* he had found her.

"My friend Tom, Miss Ray," he said, "has involved us all in a maze of trouble. A spoilt child of fortune, for *he* is the heir of Powersfort," (how plain it all appeared to her *now*) "made him ambitious of winning a bride in the character of a poor man, while *I* in the assumed one of a rich man have lost——"

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A deep flush overspread Power's face, as he raised his eyes to meet those of Frances, in his altered character. There was nothing in those clear mirrors of an innocent mind to reflect disgrace upon Power's soul. Frances saw all she desired in his eloquent glance. What did she care for the absence of wealth? Tom's little plot only appeared a boyish trick to her, in which Power helped him out. Power read her response in her eyes, as clearly as if it were written there. He could not go on—Nor can we. Suffice it to say, that as they wound their way down the "hill of difficulty," their faces shone like those of Faith and Hope, on their way to the "Delectable Mountains." Half-way down they met two pilgrims journeying in the same direction, and, at the base, old Mr. Ray received his daughter from the hands of one to whom he was willing to resign her for ever, congratulating himself, in his secret heart, that Power was *not* the heir, as in that case he should not be obliged to separate from his darling, and feeling sure that a man possessing the knowledge and talent of Power would rise to the bench some day—which is most likely to be the case.

Aunt Esther also came up with the party—a great feat for her—to be satisfied with her own eyes that her beloved niece was in the land of the living. And so they journeyed on—two and two—Mr. Ray and his sister, Frances and Power, Tom and Mabel—to the gate, where they were met by *Matty and a policeman!*

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A little further off, leaning against the fence, was Darby, a comical smile upon his face, and keeping guard with the "tail of his eye" upon Miss Quick and her escort; in his hand his whip, *in waiting;* and further off, on more elevated ground, Mumby was perched on a limb of a tree, his feet twisted among its branches, and a bough in his hand, which he waved backwards and forwards, as though he would sweep something off the face of the earth. It was his mode, however, of testifying joy at the happy return of his master's daughter.

Mr. Ray accepted the congratulations of the servants with hearty gratitude. He looked at the policeman with some curiosity, but thinking he came to aid in the search for his missing daughter, graciously acknowledged his salute. When, however, that limb of the law directed his practised eye to the two young men, whom he had imagined to be his destined prey (Matty having put him on the scent), he kept his hands and *handcuffs* in his pocket; he saw at once they were not *his* game, in fact Tom and Power looked so unmistakeably lover-like that even a policeman could hardly have the heart to arrest them there and then. So the happy pilgrims were suffered to pass the gate unmolested, and continued their route to the Celestial city with a delightful unconsciousness of the danger that awaited them at its very gate.

When the policeman had suffered the two Powers to pass, he turned his inquisitive gaze upon Matty. Giving Matty some credit for shrewdness in her ob-

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servations, and seeing she put him on a wrong scent, he naturally, or officially, turned his detective eye upon her countenance to see where *she* failed; had he secured his prisoners, most likely he would never have given *her* a second thought, but scanning her features closely, he perceivcd much shrewdness and intelligence evidently, but her eye had nothing of the detective in it, which—such contrarieties exist in nature—he rather liked as a policeman and a man. This fact of his own superiority caused him to "go further, and not fare worse." He cast his eye on her trim figure, her well arranged hair, and guessed at her orderly and industrious habits, which, as they did not derogate from his lofty superiority, but might rather conduce to his happiness, made him think seriously of becoming a pilgrim to that celestial city through whose gate his two intended victims were allowed to pass; consequently, "chaffing" Matty in an undertone about her mistake, he quietly accompanied her to the house, Darby all the time following them with his keen eye. When the Irishman saw how matters were likely to turn out, he stood up, gazed after the two, gave a prolonged whistle, and then, raising his whip which had been so long *in waiting*, smacked it vigorously several times in the air, to show what it *might* have done had there been a necessity for it.

Matty, strange to say, did not discourage the attentions of an individual of that species that had been the terror of her childhood. Whether from the "Quilp" like feeling, attributed to women of loving

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those they fear, or from some mysterious law of attraction, certain it is they suited one another, and from that day out "kept company."

And now that we have paired off so many of our characters like turtle doves, there remains nothing more to tell. We have led them to the Gate of Happiness, and, leaving them safe there out of our hands, we shall not dare to cry out—

OPEN SESAME!

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THE VOICE OF WAR.

Oh! Woe, woe, woe!
What news to hear
At the "fall" of the year!
When the golden grain is ripe for the sickle,
And the red wine pants from the grape to trickle.
Oh! woe, woe, woe!
A heavier harvest reaps the sword,
And richer wine from brave hearts is poured.
Oh! woe, woe, woe!

"Let us embrace!
It must be taken,"
With soul unshaken,
M'Mahon cries to his friend at Wœrth,
While the battery's death-balls bellow forth!
"Let us embrace.
Gentlemen forward! 'Tis certain death."
Not yet extinguished is chivalry's breath.
"Let us embrace!"

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War's telegram.
"They stood and died,
Advanced and died"—
The Reapers and the Reaped,
In pale confusion heaped.
War's telegram.
"A seething caldron." The ingredients smother
(Worse than a witch's potion) man and his brother.
War's telegram!

Peace, peace, peace!
Let the nations rise,
With unanimous cries,
And hold these huntsmen back,
Who hunt to death, their pack!
Peace, peace, peace!
They fight, they tear—with ghastly frown
They trample one another down!
Peace, peace, peace!

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ROUND THE ROUND TABLE.

EVENING I.

Enter Mrs. P., with Prudence, Patty, and Polly. Q in the corner.

Mrs. P.—Good evening, Q. Well, I declare this is quite social. Take out your work, girls, and sit round the round table.

Q.—Yes, I thought a round table pleasant; everything social is round. The world is round; the sun and moon (both social in their way) are round. We love a good round joke, and we go round the world for sport.

Patty.—But if you are Q, in the corner, where is your place at the round table?

Q.—Well observed, my dear. Nevertheless, it is easily done, all you have to do is to square the circle, and behold *four* corners.

Prudence.—But that is impossible.

Q.—So it has been said, my dear, by *men*, but all you have to do is to draw two perpendicular and two horizontal lines longitudinally and transversely across the table, and you have it *squared.*

Polly.—But what will you do with the pieces outside?

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Q.—*Do!* what you like, my dear; saw them off, and you have another table; if you like, square *it* and you have a second, and so on *ad infinitum* till you come to a point. You might think then you were at a stand. But philosophers say there is no such thing as a substance without length and breadth, and so you might go on squaring and making tables to eternity—in imagination.

Prudence.—Oh! imagination. My governess used to tell me not to give imagination the reins; she said it would lead us, I don't know where.

Q.—Give it the reins! I only want to give it a corner. But joking apart, how can we get along without imagination? Some philosophers cling to it, as a drowning man to a straw. They dare not assert that mind and matter exist. They have impressions and ideas on the subject (what is that but imagination?); in other words, they say they cannot demonstrate there is such a thing in the world *as* the world.

Patty.—Where will they put it then?

Q.—How can they put it anywhere, when they deny its existence? They modestly grant they cannot get over the *impression* and *idea* that they and the world exist, but that is all they will allow; so without imagination we should all fall to the ground.

Polly.—But they have left us no ground to fall to.

Q.—The grounds of their theory being bottomless, except in imagination, we must accept the importance of that faculty, or else believe that everything is nothing, and nothing is everything.

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Mrs. P.—I have often wondered at that theory; it is so easily disproved. Now, if I give Patty a box on the ear——

Patty.—Oh! pray don't prove the existence of matter in that way, Mrs. P.

Q.—It will only be an impression, my dear, if you look at it philosophically.

Patty.—We'll leave it to the imagination, then.

Q.—All *I* want to establish is my claim to a corner in the world. Now, if the world is round, and I have squared the circle, I think I am entitled to a corner, seeing that I have done (in imagination) what the most learned have failed to do.

Polly.—As there are three more corners, suppose we make a race for them.

Q.—That would leave a fool in the middle, and none of us have been fed on *flap-doodle* (which is the food for fools). No, my dears, I will not have you take even imaginary corners; you are socially inclined, and must go in the merry-go-round of life. As for me, I can observe better from a corner, and shall take my place in the north-east one, seeing that I mean to be dry and cold.

Mrs. P.—I am glad to see a fire at that rate. I hope you are not going to scatter withering remarks; if so, we must go away.

Prudence.—I declare our time is up, and we have done nothing, I thought we were to have discussed some interesting topic.

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Q.—Well, next time you must bring your topic with you, as gentlemen do their walking-sticks.

Polly.—To be left in a corner ?

Q.—My corner, yes; I will examine it, view its knotty points, and if approved of, lay it on the table.

Patty.—I hope we shan't discuss *matter* next time, for if the walking-stick were on the table, Mrs. P. might endeavour to prove the existence of matter with it on my head.

Q.—It would only be an *impression,* at least to the one boxed.

Polly.—If that's the way we are to receive impressions concerning matter, I for one will decline to see it demonstrated.

Prudence.—You forget it would only be our topic, which Q. compared to a walking-stick.

Patty.—Oh! I beg pardon—our topic—yes. My head is so confused between matter and——

Q.—*No* matter!

Mrs. P.—Come, girls, we must absquatulate, and leave

Q. IN THE CORNER.

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A GERMAN LEGEND,

SHOWING HOW A PRINCE WOOED A BARON'S DAUGHTER, AND THE RESULT,

WITH A MORAL.

THERE lived in those feudal times of slaughter,
A Baron who had an only daughter,
For whom men would go through fire and water:
But one young Prince in particular sought her.

Now he sued in so haughty a style for her hand,
That the Baron, her father, refused the demand,
And all ingress was barred, so he gave command,
To the Prince, when he went to the Holy Land.

To join the Crusaders the Baron flies,
But to the castle the young Prince hies,
Takes it and lady by surprise,
And insists on matrimonial ties!

In vain would they keep him from the altar.
On the priest's stiff neck he places a halter,
Till the bride is his. In his arms to exalt her,
He springs. Then into the saddle doth vault her.

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The news of this marriage's solemnization,
Before he had reached his destination,
The Baron had heard: his determination
Was to march back without procrastination.

He flew to the Emperor's palace, for there
The young Prince guarded his bride so fair.
He smiled—but his eyes' demoniacal glare,
Betokened a deed that his hand would dare.

A confusion and bustle were heard in the hall,
None spoke, none shouted, but trembled all,
For the Baron had pinned to the tapestried wall
The young Prince, with his spear through body and
all.

Then he fled, before they could raise an alarm,
And snatched at the bride, placed her under his arm,
Put spurs to his steed, and soon snug and warm,
In his castle he crouched, like a hair in her form.

When he fled, the Emperor made a great rout,
And asked his retainers what they were about,
At which they all raised a thundering shout,
And swore they'd demolish the foe out and out!

Now the Baron's stout castle stood on a rock;
So vainly the battering rams did knock.
The beseigers looked sheepish. It felt the shock,
As may feel, when the rain drops, the back of a cock.

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The Emperor looked in a very great puzzle,
Said he, he shall not us thus bamboozle,
For if with his knight-ship we can't have a tuzzle,
We shan't let a morsel enter his muzzle.

So they made an encampment round the spot,
And flattered themselves the old fox was caught;
That when he had nothing to put in the pot,
He'd surrender, whether he liked it or not!

Months passed. At length the assailants grew crazy;
Their resources were failing; the beseiged took it easy.
At length on the ramparts appeared, fat and greasy,
The Baron, who spoke while he cleared his throat wheezy—

"My friends, I perceive your provisions fail ye,
By your lantern jaws, and visages paly;
If ye will, with good Rhenish I'll regale ye,
Some venison choice, and hams of Westphalia."

So he let huge baskets down from the wall,
At whose rare contents they did eagerly fall;
Each swooped on the prey like a hungry jackall,
From the grenadier stout to the drummer small.

But one said as the last bone he did pick—
"With such fare, no wonder the baron looked sleek.
But how does he get it?" Their hearts beat quick
As they eyed each other and whispered, "*Old Nick.*"

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So the men at the victuals began to snivel;
The Baron they said was uncommonly civil,
But argued—to save their bodies from evil,
They dare not sell their souls to the devil!

So the Emperor found that he was beat,
When for king or for country they would not eat;
Yet, as the Baron had given a treat,
The least *he* could do was to re-treat.

Now the mystery was this—'Neath the dungeon keep
Was a cave that under the castle did creep,
Till it led to a valley wide and deep,
Whence food to the castle did daily peep.

And the Moral is this—When something new,
Comes under your nose, you can't see through,
Think that Nature has secrets unknown to you,
And attribute it not *to you know who.*

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SEEING A BUNYIP.

BY HE-OAK.

It was not many months since I had left my island home to join some friends in the colony, who were already deep in the mysteries of gold-digging in Victoria.

We were seated in our tent one rainy evening, chatting over the probable success of our undertaking, building (nuggety) castles in the air, and speculating on our future "prospects," when, being the last new chum, I was suddenly asked, "How I liked Australia?"

A simple question, reader, and yet a delicate one to answer, for it was at the solicitation of those friends, that I had left my native country, and there was not yet enough of the "dust" to blind our eyes to the naked reality of our precarious position, but only just sufficient to make them water at the increasing delicacy of our purses, in a situation not hitherto favourable to their capacity for extension.

In plain words, I was dissatisfied; but not wishing to hurt the feelings of my friends, I delayed answering the question, and pondered a reply.

As I contrasted the *dis*-embowelled gold-fields with their *whims* and oddities, the once laughing limpid

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creek rushing by in dull and sullen rage, the *down-turned* hills, the *celestials* with a not heavenly odour from their camp. As I contrasted all this with the country I had left, the most picturesque part of our picturesque isle, Killarney, my heart sank for a moment. Killarney with its legendary lakes, its fairy haunted caves and mountains, its ruined monastries, with their buried monks and nuns, where the banshee swept by at intervals, foretelling the death of some descendant of the "Ould ancient families of the counthry." As all this floated in my imagination, I felt as if the world had indeed been turned upside down, and that I had been vomited out of a gravel pit at the other end.

These dissolving views only occupied the space of a few seconds, while my head was covered by my hands.

Looking up I replied—

"This country is very well, but it is too *new;* there are no associations to bind us to the past, which make the lives of our ancestors like the remembrance of a by-gone life of our own. Nothing to remind us that we are anything but upstarts on the soil. No ruins. No ghosts."

"Have you ever seen a bunyip?" said one of my companions.

I started, but soon recovered my self-possession.

"A bun-yip, did you say? Is it a gnome of the mine, a creature of the creek, or a being of the bush?" I said.

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"It is the blackfellow's bogy, at all events," replied another; "but, seriously speaking," continued he, with increasing gravity, "it is something which cannot be explained, and, I believe, the sight of it is enough to make your hair uncurl with horror, and your eyes dilate with mysterious awe. The blackfellows' ignorance of our language prevents their description of it being equal to the case; but I hear the great danger is in the *eyes;* avoid them if you can. Should they attract you, they will inevitably lure you to——"

"I hope to a big nugget," said I, interrupting him. "Well," I continued, "if you can only establish a ghost, or some well-authenticated, intangible being here, I shall think better of this country, especially if it point to a nuggety 'monster'; and when the giant is hanged (in the scales), drawn and *quartered* (there were four of us), see if I am not back again to the Isle of Saints."

"Not a bit of it," said the first speaker; "there is a sort of electro-biology in the soil here that fastens a man to the earth in spite of himself. Even those who do go 'home,' as it is called, invariably return. The old country, having cast us out, like Hagar and Ishmael into the wilderness, does not gladly welcome us back. We must make up our minds to stay in the desert."

"If we could only meet the Angel now," suggested another friend.

"Or a Bunyip," said another, winking at the speaker.

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"Or both in one," remarked a third.

I mechanically felt my slender purse.

"Why not the nugget," said I, "as we are wishing, let us wish for something substantial; though not so picturesque as an angel, or romantic as a bunyip, it might ——"

"Lead to both," said the winker.

Of course, I had to keep never minding. "I fancy," I said, starting up, "it is time to think of retiring; if we mean to unearth our 'monster,' we must be stirring betimes."

It was not difficult to induce my companions to seek repose after a hard day's work. So we all sought our couches to dream of monster nuggets, angels, and bunyips, and had the satisfaction to rise next morning with renewed vigour, increased by a hearty breakfast, and then commenced our day's work by preparing to descend the shaft of "The Elbow Grease Co.," which we considered the avenue to future wealth, importance, and bliss, our hopes being increased by the fact of some "fortunate stranger" having been found in the vicinity, and we did not see why we should not have the luck of coming upon one of these "aliens" as well as another.

So with my head full of these brilliant visions, I was the first to descend the shaft.

It is very easy to be wise after the event. A goose might tell how unwise it was of Napoleon I. to go to Russia, and ditto III. to Saarbruck; and young heads of five and twenty, full of visions and hopes, are not

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apt to be over cautious, else, considering the rain of the previous evening, we might have anticipated a loosening of the soil. However, I had no sooner reached the bottom, when crash came a fall of something heavy on my helpless head; like a box on the ear from Mother Earth to bring me to my sober senses, and teach me not to pry into her secrets for the future.

I "caved in" at once, and became unconscious. How long I remained in this state I know not; but it appeared to me as if only a few moments had elapsed, when I found myself groping in the dark.

I strained my eyeballs for light in vain, I stretched out my arms for space, but obstruction met them on every side. I strove to cry, but my voice had so strange a sound it terrified myself.

Once I thought I heard a confused hubbub of noises as if from another world; but the singing in my ears drowned it; only once the familiar dissyllable "nugget" struck me, but a sickening sense of the valueless nature of earthly possessions came over me, and I madly wrestled for space and air.

At last I saw a sort of dull light glimmer round me, but when I looked for its source, I only met with more impenetrable darkness. I thought I saw nuggets sticking out of the sides of the rocks that held me captive, and Robinson Crusoe-like I should have spurned them with my foot but that it was held fast, and besides I had no place to kick them to! However, I resolved to pursue the direction of the

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dull light if possible, and wildly straining my eyeballs, I saw to my horror, two luminous concave halos dilating and contracting by turns, until at length swerving to a particular focus, they became fixed (like the eyes in a picture) to a certain spot.

I instinctively turned to the place indicated by those hideous orbs, and saw a pit, the mouth of which was circled with a blueish light, the reflection from those monstrous eyes.

I looked down, and the longer I looked, stereoscope-like, the deeper it became, and the more palpable, until at last it stretched downwards to such an interminable length that it became bottomless! "Gracious heavens!" I exclaimed, "I am at the mouth of the bottomless pit; those eyes have lured me on to destruction. I strove to fall backwards, and to my inexpressible relief, felt some one dragging me away from it.

I must then have fainted, for after this I remember nothing, till with a sort of gasp I encountered space and air.

I thought I heard the word, bunyip, but did not dare open my eyes, lest I should meet once again those dreadful orbs, and perhaps see the mysterious being to whom they belonged.

I cannot tell how long I remained in this state, but it seemed to me as if I were slowly getting happier; a sense of delicious languor pervaded my being. I thought I heard angels' voices, but still I opened not my eyes. I now distinctly heard some whispering,

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and the word *bunyip*, again, plainly this time, fell on my ears. With a desperate effort of moral courage, I opened my eyes, and there met my wistful gaze, two soft brown sympathising eyes, apparently glistening from a late tear, like an auricula after a shower.

I felt my senseless head swim like a toy-boat on the ocean, and my ears tingle for joy, like a merry tune of the Lancashire Bellringers.

One of my friends then said aloud—

"He is all right now. Our kind German friend and her daughter have come to see you. You have to thank Mrs. Bunwhipp's motherly kindness for your recovery," continued he, while the good-natured fellow brushed away a tear himself, "and we hope the sight of her fair daughter will effect a perfect cure, as it ought."

I was on my couch almost powerless as yet, but I contrived to grasp the hands held out to me in gratitude for their ready kindness.

I had had a narrow escape, but to make a long story short, my friends dug me out when I was at the last gasp, and with prompt care and attention, aided by feminine tact and skill, I slowly recovered.

"We shall not tell you about the big nugget yet," said one of my friends, but we have him in custody.

It was quite true, in digging me out they had come upon a large nugget, which they literally kicked aside for a time.

My share enabled me to quit a life I had little relish for, and start me in my profession.

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And while I write, a few years after these events took place, the sweet eyes that lured me back to life still shine on my path, while a couple of semi-bunyips yell so vociferously I am forced to resign my pen, and meeting my wife in the passage, who has run to see what is the matter, I must say in looking in her face I distinctly

SEE A BUNWHIPP.

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CONSOLATION.

WITHIN a father's home there lived
  Three maidens, and be sure
His leisure hours they oft beguiled,
  With converse sweet and pure.

He loved them all; no eye could tell,
  By any outward test,
Which prized he most, yet in his heart
  Of hearts, he loved one best.

Perchance, that on *that* gentle stem
  Life's blossom hung more frail;
That on *that* cheek the rose of health
  Bloomed all too purely pale.

Perchance, *he* reasoned not—for love
  Has no logician's lore;
He only felt that in his heart
  Of hearts he loved *one* more.

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This father had a dream one night—
  He dreamt that he had grown
An older man, and he must take
  A journey all alone.

A journey to a distant land,
  A fairer land than this;
But knowing he must go alone,
  Marred all his sense of bliss.

"I know," he said, within his dream
  "The land is very fair,
And I am promised rest from toil
  And freedom from all care.

"But *here*, though rugged is life's path,
  And stormy is its sea,
I have within my home three flowers
  That smile and bloom for me.

"I cannot take them with me there."
  (He never argued *why*,
But to his passive mind it seemed
  A sad fatality).

"I cannot take them with me there,
  I know that like a star
Each one shall shine some distant day,
  I prize them as they *are*.

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"Ah! if but *one just as she is,*
The one I love the best,
Might go before me there and lie
For ever on my breast!"

* * * * *

He slumbered on, and when day broke
Forgotten was his dream:
His flowers were gathered round his board,
Fresh as the morning's beam.

Yet from that time a boding fear,
A fear he could not speak,
Thrilled through his heart each night, when he
Pressed *one* dear fragile cheek.

At noon the business of the day,
Life's bustle and its care,
Made him forget the boding fear
That thrilled him unaware.

But suddenly this blossom fell,
Not fading leaf by leaf,
But all so quick, doubt had no time
To wrestle with dire grief.

The miserable father, then,
Gave way to wild despair;
Time "brought" no "healing on its wing;"
There was no balm in prayer.

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He looked not to the mercies past,
  To those so freely given;
But idly let his heart-strings bleed
  From whence his rose was riven.

* * * * *

Years passed, and brought no change. At length
  The father dreamt again.
He thought he saw a distant land,
  Beyond a distant main.

It seemed to him, within his dream,
  That he had older grown;
And that he must a journey take
  To this land all alone.

And on the shore of that far sea,
  The purple rocks disclose,
Bending upon its leafy stem,
  A pure and shining rose.

"My flower, my own transplanted flower!"
  The dreamer, gasping, said:
The form dissolved, and slowly took
  That of the *living dead.*

The very dress she used to wear;
  The smile—could he forget?—
He strove to clasp her; even in dreams
  That transport is—Not yet.

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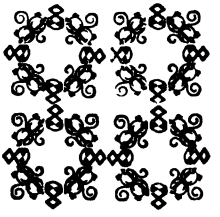
The slumberer woke. With lightning flash
  The old dream he could see;
His boding fears; his vague alarms;
  The dread reality!

"Great God! I see it all. No more
  Rebellious regret."
He bowed his head, but murmured oft—
  "Not yet, not yet, not yet."



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AUNTIE'S TALE.

FOR A LITTLE GIRL.

THE AMBER NECKLET.

ONCE upon a time there lived a noble lady, whose husband, Sir Amethyst Vere, was the possessor of a lordly castle and broad lands. Heaven had granted this loving pair three fine boys, who inherited the manly appearance and fine intellect of their father's family, but also, alas! a hastiness of temper that had destroyed the fair prospects of some of their ancestors, and, it was hinted, had wrecked the happiness (by a hasty word) of a lovely ancestress who, in consequence, had died of a broken heart.

However, by careful culture and good example, the parents of those children hoped that before they reached the period of manhood, they should have been accustomed to bring their passions under proper control, so as to insure their own happiness and that of those with whom they came in contact.

Some other time I shall tell the story of the youngest of the three boys, whose name was Jaspar, but at present, as my tale refers to a little girl, I shall proceed to relate a circumstance that happened on the eve of her birthday, when she should have all but completed her sixth year.

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Mrs. Vere, though she had a fond husband and three loving boys, and had nearly all the world can offer of happiness besides, yet yearned for one thing more, and that was a little girl. She said to herself, my husband has to attend to his affairs, my boys are occupied with their tutor, and I am very happy when we are all together; but I spend many lonely hours which, though some of them are lightened by my duties or my studies, yet both should be exalted by the companionship of a little girl, whom I would train, I trust, to be good and dutiful.

Some people seem to get every thing they desire. In course of time this lady had a daughter, a lovely little creature, not like herself though, but still very beautiful. Yet, Mrs. Vere remarked with a sigh, that even when a baby her eyes would flash fire (like her little brothers'), and the veins swell with passion on her little forehead, if she were denied anything she desired, and she would clutch her small fingers with the energy of rage when her gentle mother deprived her of what would have been hurtful to her.

This violence of temper caused the good lady much uneasiness; she often thought of the ancestress whose story had been confided to her, and when her little girl in the thoughtlessness of passion said an unkind thing to herself, which I am sorry to say she sometimes did, though she dearly loved her mother, the poor lady would weep and pray in secret, that her beloved child might grow more gentle, and not

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(through her own fault) meet the fate of her unhappy ancestress, whose image like a skeleton, often came between her and the happy future she pictured for her little Ruby (for that was her name).

Now when Ruby had nearly completed her sixth year, her parents thought it time to place their two eldest sons in the University. You see they were very much older than Ruby, who was a sort of plaything among them. So they departed for the metropolis, bringing Ruby with them, and placing their sons at the University, and leaving their youngest son to the care of his tutor, they determined to travel a little for amusement before they returned to their castle. I need not stop to describe all the beautiful places they visited, but at length they chose a residence for a change near the sea-coast. The lady loved the sea, and often when Ruby's papa was out in the neighbourhood talking over the affairs of the world with some great clever people, Ruby and her mother would walk down to the glistening beach, and while the little girl would be picking up shells, white, red, violet and yellow, and lovely pebbles, as smooth, and round, and polished as precious stones, Mrs. Vere would sit in the shelter of the rocks with a favourite book, and occasionally look up to see that her little daughter was safe. Now Ruby was very fond of going close to the edge of the water, and being rather liable to take cold, her mother had charged her not to wet her feet, but the sparkling waves that leaped so merrily on the pebbly strand, and the dancing spray that dashed its

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feathery foam almost in her face, and sometimes powdered her dress and kissed her feet, so delighted her that she could not resist going further than she ought; so following a receding wave and another coming in so rapidly that she had not time to retreat, the water had nearly reached her knees before her mother had time to rush out and catch her in her arms.

Mrs. Vere then chid Ruby gently for having disobeyed her commands, and told her in consequence of her thoughtlessness, she should be unable to bring her (owing to her wet feet) to a magnificent cave, about half a mile off, that her papa and she had visited before, and that she must take off her shoes and stockings and dry them in the sun, and when that was done it would be time to return, as dinner and papa should both be waiting for them. Upon hearing this, Ruby cried very bitterly, and said she could walk very well with wet feet; that it would not do her any harm; that she *must* go the cave, as papa would be asking her about it when she got home; she *knew* he would, &c. Her mother listened quietly for a time, and then proceeded to take off the shoes and stockings, which was no easy matter, I can tell you, for Ruby kicked and plunged like an untamed filly; all the time, I am sorry to say, calling her mother "nasty" and "cruel." However, it was done at last, and the shoes and stockings hung on the rocks to dry, and then wrapping a shawl round the sobbing child, Mrs. Vere told her if she would sit still, she would

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tell her all about the magnificent cave they had intended to see, and which they should visit another day.

Ruby at last laid her head on her mother's lap, who proceeded to tell her that this cave ran for a long distance under the rocks, that just above the entrance to the cave was something like the forms of two children, leaning against one another, all in stone, of course; that at the far end of the cave the rocks were piled up like a throne, and hanging from its roof were long pieces of shining spar like the lustres in their drawing-room, and the floor looked as if it had been paved with diamonds, as large and larger than walnuts, and altogether it seemed fit for the dwelling of the king of the sea, who in very old times people believed inhabited those magnificent caverns.

All this Mrs. Vere told Ruby, who often interrupted her with expressions of wonder, but as the lady was continuing to relate many more strange things, observing that Ruby was silent, she bent down close to her face, and saw that the little girl was sound asleep; so drawing the shawl more comfortably round her, Mrs. Vere herself leaned back against the rock, and as her eyes were dazzled by the glare of the sun on the sand, she closed both them and her book, for a time, and began thinking of the cave she had just been describing to her little daughter; then the image of her child's pretty feet in the sparkling sand, with the wave circling them, caused her more than once to look up, and satisfy herself that she was safe beside

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her. The gentle murmur of the rippling waves again soothed her and she soon sat as placidly as the sleeping child by her side.

* * * * * *

After a while, to her astonishment, she saw a little figure tripping along by the edge of the waves—not a quarter the size of Ruby—her long hair, which was the colour of the light green sea-weed, floated down her shoulders to rest on the waves; her eyes were the colour of the gem aqua-marine, and sparkled like the precious stone; her teeth resembled rows of seed pearls, and her lips were like the reddest coral. In her hand she carried a sort of spear or wand, and when she came close to the land she drove it into the earth, and then fixing it firmly, she grasped it tightly and swung herself lightly over to where Ruby's mother was reclining, then gliding gracefully down the rod she seated herself close to Mrs. Vere, on the rock.

The lady turned her eyes slowly to her fairy visitor, and looked at her from head to foot. Somehow she did not look exactly like a child; and yet it appeared as if she never had been younger, nor ever should grow older, or anything but just what she was.

The little creature eyed the lady for some time, but said nothing. At length Ruby's mother asked her why she was there, and did she want anything from her? At this the tiny creature smiled sorrowfully, and said she wanted her little girl. Then the mother took up the child (shawl and all), and held her to her bosom, and said she could not part from her.

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The fairy then said she must: that it would be for her good; that she would only remove her, for a season, into her magnificent halls, hung with diamond lustres and paved with precious stones; that her bed should be made from the fragrant sea-weed, dried and crushed; and that she should have the most delicious little fish for breakfast and supper, besides some rare honey which their bees made in the cave. But that come she must, on account of her temper; but she promised to restore her happier and better than ever (she hoped), after a short probation, unless she proved as obstinate as the rocks that were to be her home; in which case it would be better for her to become a rock (which she should) than to go about the world like a rolling stone, knocking against and injuring every one that came in her way; and at last, falling on something harder than herself, she would be dashed to pieces.

The dread Ancestress came into the lady's mind, as the small creature uttered this harangue.

"Oh! I would save her from that fate," said the lady, clutching her child closer to her bosom.

"In the caverns where we live," said the fairy, "are sorrowful sea-birds," that come to us for food occasionally; we give them little fishes sometimes, and at other times a portion of the crystallized honey (of which they are very fond), which is found in our caverns. It is said these sea-birds are the spirits of impenitent children, and they perch themselves nightly on the rocks about our dwelling, and weep

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—their tears turn to beads of amber,* which we gather to make necklets for the children entrusted to us, on account of their evil temper.

"Now these necklets have a peculiar virtue; we place them on the necks of our little wards, and whenever they are ill-tempered or rude, a bead drops off, which, strange to say, is never found again. Another fit of passion and another bead rolls off, and so on—if the children do not control themselves in time—until at last, if they are thoroughly obstinate and impenitent the necklet grows so tight that the children are choked, and never having been softened by the tears of penitence, they turn into rocks, and so remain a monument of their own hardness for ever and ever.

"I am happy to say this rarely happens. Out of some thousands of children entrusted to us not more than half-a-dozen have been irreclaimable. You may see two of the most noted among them if you walk down near our king's dwelling; they are placed above the entrance as a warning to our future charges. You can still trace the resemblance to their forms though they have been there hundreds of years.

"But generally when the first bead rolls off, the little hands go up to the neck to feel for the lost bead; and the next time passion gets the better of the child it begins counting the beads, and missing *one*, a tear takes its place in which case the next bead remains

* "The loveliest amber
That ever the sorrowing sea-bird has wept."—*Lalla Rookh.*

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stationary, and the child becomes tractable. So there is seldom more than one lost; two sometimes, but rarely three, which is not very many considering the number is thirty-two."

"Thirty-two," said the lady, "and amber! tell me if there is a heart of the same material hanging in the centre."

"Yes," said the fairy, "and it is generally the last to go, for when *it* is gone the necklet becomes too tight and so——"

The lady groaned. Her husband, among other trinkets, had given her an *Amber Necklet* with a heart in the centre. It was very valuable and pretty, and had belonged to the ancestress whose story he told her at the time, and said also that his family were superstitious about it, and would never wear it; but he hoped she should not be so nonsensical, and when their little girl was old enough, he said, he hoped to see it on her too.

The lady, however, had never worn it. Her husband thought it was perhaps because it was not quite the fashion just then.

But it was just the ornament for a little girl, and once in her hearing her papa had said that Ruby must have it on her sixth birthday, and Ruby should be six to-morrow. And the lady then felt it must be one of the *trial necklets* the fairy spoke of.

The tiny creature paused when she saw the lady in deep thought, and looking so sorrowful. At length putting her hand into a little pocket by her side, made

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of a sort of elastic sea-weed, she drew out an amber necklet exactly like the one the lady had in her casket, and going over to the sleeping child, was preparing to clasp it round her neck, when the lady shrieked and drew Ruby closer to her bosom, while with one hand she endeavoured to push the fairy away.

The little creature then held up one of her taper fingers, and saying, "*Remember!*" vanished.

The poor lady then gave a sigh of relief, but when she drew back her hand and felt for Ruby there was no Ruby. She then cried out, "Ruby, my child; my child, where are you?"

"Here I am mother; are my stockings dry yet?" said Ruby, looking up.

"The Necklet. Where is it?" said Mrs. Vere, passionately. "Oh! Ruby."

"Oh!" said Ruby, "see the pretty necklace I made by stringing the shells together. I got the thread of silk that was marking your book, while you were asleep."

"Asleep! have I been asleep?"

"Yes, mother; and it seemed as if you were talking to somebody."

"So I was Ruby. Ruby, do you know you shall be six to-morrow?" said her mother as they walked home.

"Yes, and Papa says I am to have the amber necklet when I am six."

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"Yes, darling, but do you know that whenever you are angry or rude a bead shall drop off? and if it often happens the necklet shall grow too tight for you, and then——. So beware! Had you not better wait till you are older and wiser?"

"Oh no, mother; pray give me the necklet, and I shall try so hard not to be rude or angry."

The necklet was put round Ruby's neck on her birthday.

On one very sad occasion, I am sorry to say, Ruby forgot her promise, and she allowed herself to be so overcome by passion and obstinacy that she had to be put to bed. She had fallen into a fitful slumber from which she awoke sullen and disobedient. On this sad occasion Ruby put her hand to her necklet and began counting her beads, when, to her dismay (for she had almost forgotten what her mother had told her about the beads should she be angry and disobedient) she found there were but *thirty-one.* And her papa had told her he should count the beads upon every anniversary of her birthday.

She was very sorrowful when she re-clasped the necklet, and fancied it felt tighter round her neck than the loss of only one bead should make it. She looked very much ashamed at dinner that day; and though she searched from the top to the bottom of the house never found the bead.

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I am happy to add that there was never another bead lost, for though Ruby was sometimes angry, sorrow for her fault followed so quickly after its commission that the bead had not time to roll off.

When Ruby came to be an older and a wiser girl, her mother wrote down the story of the "Amber Necklet" for her. *But the bead was never found.*

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THE GLASS STEAM ENGINE:

THE EIGHTH WONDER OF THE WORLD.

Suggested by seeing the Glass Steam Engine lately exhibited in Melbourne.

THE wonders that we read of in old time,
Were great in strength, in magnitude sublime.
The Pyramids of Egypt—vast monstrosities;
Babylon's Walls—gigantic curiosities.
The ivory form of Jupiter Olympius
(Which ne'er to see the Greek considered impious),
The lofty *Pharos*, with its towering light;
Diana's Fane, with golden radiance bright;
The bronze Colossus, 'twixt whose legs could sail
A fleet of ships with pennons to the gale!
The Mausoleum, with its sculptured gloom
To dignify the darkness of the tomb—
These were sublime, but oft the hirelings' blood
Cemented temples destined for a god.
With tyrant's lash thousands of crouching slaves
Expired to give their lords immortal graves!—
—Look on that picture and on *this*, my friends,
See that transparent tracery which tends
To teach one truth unknown at the old Nile,

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To raise mankind by lessening servile toil,
The "very image" of its iron sire,
To our dull sense it brings his mysteries nigher,
And as a child's simplicity reveals
What man in sterner humour oft conceals,
Because of its frail nature we can see
The artifice he hides in majesty.
It plays its part before delighted eyes,
While *he* his journey on life's hard road plies,
Made of the frailest of all earthly things,
Blown like a bubble on the zephyr's wings,
Supplied with soul by a fair water-sprite,
"It walks" the platform, "like a thing of light,"
And makes us feel, though more we see it never,
"A thing of beauty is a joy for ever!"

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"IT LITTLE MATTERS JOY OR GRIEF."

THE sands of Life run swift away,
They run by night, they run by day;
They run in poverty and wealth;
They run in sickness and in health;
They sparkling run in hours of gladness;
They heavily run in hours of sadness;
We cannot grasp one shining treasure;
We can't repulse one tear-dimmed measure.
With course so swift, and stay so brief,
It little matters joy or grief!

The happiest day must have an end;
  The saddest night must bring a morning;
The twilight dark and fair doth blend;
  The sun and stars by turns adorning.
And some have skies scarce touched by clouds,
O'er others stretch impervious shrouds,
While some with pitiless rain will weep;
But through all this Time's sands shall creep.
With course so swift, and stay so brief,
It little matters joy or grief!

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We weave for future years a crown
  Our happy brows to grace. Alas!
While Time keeps turning up and down—
  Still up and down his constant glass.
That future is our present. *Here*
  Life's river with us forward sweeps;
The crown has fled for many a year,
  But underneath Time's sand still creeps.
With course so swift, and stay so brief,
It little matters joy or grief!

Yet, still, the yearning heart will crave
For something that it may not have,
Joyful or sad, 'twill throb and thrill
As hope may charm, or sorrow chill;
Unheeding that 'mid this wild play
The sands of Life still slip away.
With course so swift, and stay so brief,
It little matters, joy or grief!

And when the last, last grains shall drop,
  That form our little earthly mound,
And Life's small wheel shall lightly stop
  Within the great one turning round.
One smile or tear—or more or less—
  When smiles and tears alike are vain,

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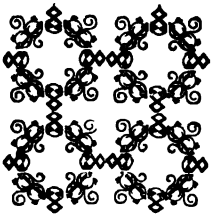
A hand to wound, or to caress,
  When hearts can feel nor joy nor pain.
When Life's small wheel has lightly stopped;
When the last grain of sand has dropped.
With course so swift, and stay so brief,
It little matters, joy or grief!



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SCIENCE AND SERMONS.

Written during the controversy on the above subject in the "Argus."

I HAVE been a not uninterested reader of the various letters which have lately appeared in the leading public journals concerning Science and Sermons. And while it is impossible not to acknowledge the integrity discernible in the writers on both sides of the question, it is but fair to ask, what may be the effect of such conflicting statements on the minds of the mass of the people, who have sufficient intelligence to value, perhaps, both science and sermons, but have no opportunity to study either deeply—and sufficient discernment to see the antagonism existing between two classes whom they have been accustomed to reverence for their superior attainments, and value for their intellectual pursuits. Two classes, one of which endeavours to ameliorate the condition of mankind by securing its temporal benefit; the other, by the hope of training it for an immortal hereafter. Now, even the least observant cannot shut his eyes to the wonders which science has achieved. Wonders that were not accomplished at once, but required mind after mind,

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and age after age, to unravel their mysteries, and hand down their secrets to us—like the post system of old times that we read of as established in India. Men were stationed at intervals, who, as the letters were handed to them, ran their allotted distance, till at length, over an incredible space, the important news reached its destination. So our great minds have been our intellectual post-men, who have handed their mysterious secrets from one to another—their destination, the nineteenth century—mysteries revealed in the steam-engine, the telegraph, &c., &c. More marvels are on their way. We must believe in science, we see its *results*, and we cannot disbelieve its future any more than its past.

But must we doubt Religion in consequence?

As well might we lose belief in ourselves; in every noble instinct of our nature—in veneration; in hope; in affection; even in ambition, which the world fails to satisfy; in the desire for immortality, a spark which has not been kindled in vain, its upward struggles showing its capacity for blazing in a higher atmosphere.

We cannot shut out religion from the heart of man; from the savage to the sage it is there in some form or other. As well shut out the sun from the world!

But let Science and Sermons have the same starting point—Humility; and the same gaol—Truth.

Their paths may and must widely diverge: the one through the rocks, under the seas, in the bowels of

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the earth; in the stars of the universe. The other also has its rocks whose hieroglyphics are as difficult to read; its seas as impossible to fathom; its mysteries deeper than the earth's cavities; its stars of hope. But let the aim of both be the discovery of Truth, at whatever cost. Then, and not till then, will they shake hands; then, and not till then, shall we have science in sermons, and sermons in science; then, as our immortal bard has said (what has he *not* said?) shall we have—

> "Tongues in the trees,
> Books in the running brooks,
> *Sermons in stones,*
> And GOOD IN EVERYTHING."

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STANZAS.

Be still, my heart, be still!
What though the sky be all one misty grey,
And even life's sun may set without a ray.
Although thou dost not throb in lofty halls,
Nor flutter when a plume from fortune falls,
Yet peace in lowliness is oftenest found
Close to its nest then on the dewy ground.
Lie still, my heart, lie still!

Be still, my heart, be still—
Although thine aspirations may be high,
High as the stars—on earth thou yet must lie,
And though in thy still chambers, dark and damp,
The hand of glory holds no sacred lamp,
Yet loveliest flowers lie closest to earth's breast;
Down then and with her take thy quiet rest—
Be still, my heart, be still!

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Be still, my heart, be still!
What though affection's glance grows cold and grave,
And Love, life's beacon, sink beneath the wave;
Though every shore for thee be dark and drear,
There yet is one to which thou'lt surely steer.
Close to life's surging sea is that lone shore,
There finding rest for ever, evermore,
Lie still, my heart—lie still!

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LES BAS BLEUS.

BY SHE-OAK.

UPON hearing some Australian ladies, who had agreed to meet together periodically for the purpose of intellectual improvement, contemptuously designated "Blue Stockings," we take leave, not having a more formidable weapon at command, to point our *(magnum bonum)* barrel at those unlucky individuals whose cause is growing weaker every day, and who must be content to stand our "paper pellets" till they abandon a hopeless warfare.

It has been remarked that you have no right to poke a man's fire till you have been acquainted with him at least seven years. So, though not a native "gum-sucker," yet having been fed (by hand) for upwards of seven years upon wattle gum, we think ourselves entitled to stand up in defence of colonial and more particularly native "Blues."

For the benefit of the young readers of our book, who have not yet cut their literary teeth, we shall give the origin of "Les Bas Blues" in as few words as possible.

At the residence of the celebrated Mrs. Elizabeth Montague, where the *literati* of the period used to

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assemble in the evening, for the purpose of social and intellectual entertainment; it was customary to go in *undress*, in contradistinction to fashionable parties, where full dress was an essential particular.

One evening a foreigner, confident in his *savoir faire*, exclaimed, on noticing Dr. Stillingfleet's grey woollen hose—"*O! Les Bas Blues!*"

Hence the expression. We need scarcely say how it has been *Miss*-applied since.

Now, though the Lords of Creation doubtless think that it is their privilege exclusively to furnish their understanding, and have repeatedly made a foot-ball of these unfortunate stockings to fling at our heads, we shall not be so unlady-like as to return the compliment, but, begging their pardon, quietly draw them on.

But, to drop metaphor, is the mind not to be developed because it is a woman's? Is the intellect not to be expanded because it is feminine? (except in the prescribed boarding-school fashion).

Man has graciously allowed us to educate our fingers till they can call wonders from the "vasty deep" of melody. Those taper fairies can skilfully thread the mazes of the chromatic and diatomic scales, can make the piano trill like a lark, chatter like a magpie, roar like a lion, and laugh like a hyena.

He has willed also, that our feet should be as enchanting as our hands, that they should *balancer*, *avancer*, *chasser*, *dechasser* for his amusement—skim the surface of mother earth as though they did not

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belong to her, for his entertainment, and cut capers in the air for his astonishment.

He has clamorously insisted on our throats being cultivated. Who is not aware that a lucky windpipe will coax more gold from men's pockets than the most charming (woman's) book, or the most graceful poem or picture? Even the tongue is permitted to lisp in several languages, in spite of Milton's authority that "one tongue was enough for a woman!"

Man has also encouraged the cultivation of the *heart* in a general way, as affection is necessary to him in his hours of relaxation. But the HEAD. Ah! twine *it* with pearls, wreath it with roses, bring the diamond from the mine, the coral from the deep to adorn its beauty *without*, but let the immortal spark *within* alone! *It* may die out; it must not have one drop of the "midnight oil" to feed it—and yet that lamp would shed a diviner glow on the face of beauty than ruby or pearl, lily or rose.

How rarely has woman's intellect been the subject of praise. Are there not verses enough to her eyes alone—stanzas, which if pinned together would reach from pole to pole; sonnets to eyebrows sufficient to circle Capricornus; while those to her lips would go round the equator. Her tresses have kindled more enthusiasm than any of nature's wonders, not excepting a comet's tail (which they resemble at present), and the *tout ensemble* has given themes to poets from Homer to ZACHARIAH SUTCLIFFE!

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Peaches, cherries, strawberries and cream, &c., &c., have been enlisted as models for her separate beauties (we are happy to say the market-garden order of poetry is going out of fashion), the tears her loveliness has caused to flow would float the *Great Britain*, the accompanying sighs would fill her sails, and her frowns dash her on every known rock!

Alas, alas! has not this vain incense to a false idol made us too often the senseless inanimate things we sometimes are.

The blocks of wood or stone, marble or gold when fashioned into objects of worship, lose even their intrinsic value; they might have contributed to the comfort or ornament of domestic life, have graced the walks of art or helped to enrich impoverished souls by the golden treasures of a refined intellect.

But no, the inanimate idol was suffered to remain on its pedestal—despised often—sometimes feared by the hand that placed it there!

But there is another aspect in which by far the greater number of our "masters" are apt to view us; namely, as Housewives.

They like to consider the kitchen our temple, the broom our sceptre, and the needle our legitimate weapon. Now, let it be understood, *we do not undervalue these things*, at least the true blues don't. We have known ladies who could make first-rate poems and pies, who could tell a tale and toss a pancake with equal spirit, mould a heroine or a *blanc mange* in exquisite perfection. We strongly suspect that the

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household of a *true blue* would be better arranged than that of a person we shall say *very green.*

If men only knew how much more they have to dread from ignorance than knowledge, they should not run their heads so often against a *lampless post.*

Nature, it is said, abhors a vacuum, and there is no vacuum so dreary as the empty head of a silly woman.

Friends, countrywomen, sisters! let us not be afraid of the celestial colour. Depend upon it, in the "good time coming," man will transfer his homage from blue eyes to blue stockings, and though many of us may not live to see the day of our triumph, let us be satisfied that through the clouds of the long-wished-for dawn we may already discern the fringes of the

BLUE-STREAKED BANNER.

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PENSEES, PANSIES.

We shine not like our sister flowers
  In Beauty's regal dress,
But bear the shade of pensive hours
  With weeping spring's caress.

When Flora's incense, scattered wide,
  Hung o'er her favourites;
Her fragrant hand she turned aside,
  And left us but our wits.

Therefore, we seek not beauty's prize,
  Fear not the critic's frown,
Contented with the sympathies,
  Of natures like our own.

There is for every flower that blows,
  Some kindred mind; we fancy
Nature has deepest charms for those
  Who cultivate a *Pensée!*

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VICTORIA.

CROWNED by the Southern Sun she sits,
  The Ocean at her feet,
Smiling amid the World's new lands
  With hope and promise sweet;
While strangers leave the grand old West
  In consecrated glory,
To write upon her virgin page
  Their fresh lives' future story.

Though no time-honoured temples rise
  In majesty of Art,
Nor graceful columns spring to speak
  How Heroes played their part,
And though, for her, no ruined fanes
  In broken words can tell
Of beauty that has passed away
  Still haunted by its spell,

Yes SHE can point to spreading lands
  Where sons of honest toil
May yet, by their untiring hands,
  Be lords of the new Soil;

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Can lead to untried fields of Wealth,
  To unknown walks of art,
Whose clue may be the golden veins,
  That spring from out her heart.

Australia Felix! Happy South!
  Victoria! victory!
The joy of youth is with thee yet;
  The Triumph—yet to be,
Thou'rt strong in youth and health and wealth,
  Fearless in energy,
When stronger still in God and Truth,
  Victoria! Victory!

THE END.

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